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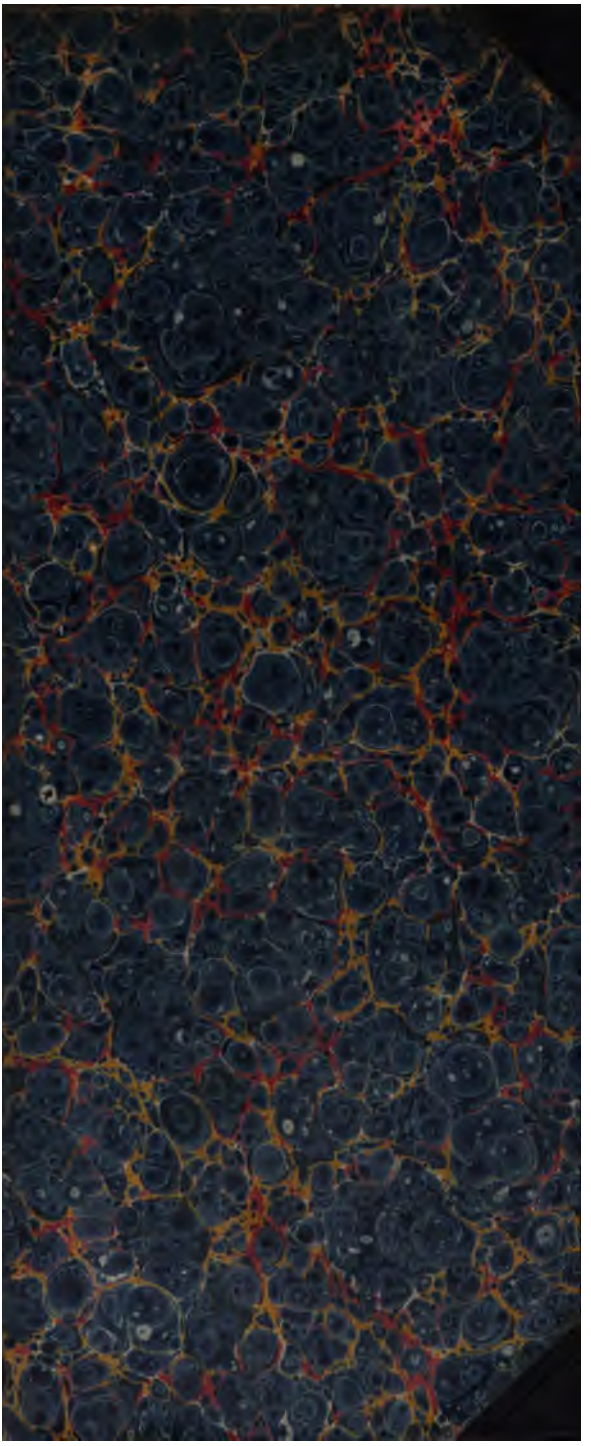

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MELMOTH HOUSE:

A NOVEL.

IN

THREE VOLUMES,

BY

MRS. J. JENNER.

VOL III.

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MELMOTH HOUSE.

LETTER I.

COL. YORKE TO SIR CHARLES BELMONT.

Brighton, June 18, 1813.

YOU may spare your knight errantry for patching up broken reputations, my good friend; at least so far as regards Miss Melville. But if you are such a man of mettle, unfurl your banner, and thousands will flock to your standard. Sir James and Lady Mitford, with their two nieces and Miss Melville, are now at Brighton. Miss Melville's appearance in public, and her forming a part of the family of so respectable a woman as Lady Mitford, refutes all the chimeras

of your brain. The child, the nurse, &c. are dishes of your own cooking up; not one syllable of which do I credit.

I am half in love with this angelic woman myself. "In love!" you exclaim, "pray, how could you become acquainted with Miss Melville?" Why, my good fellow, at a ball; the only place we military men have a chance of being introduced to the dear creatures, who make dancing supportable even in the dog days; and I rather suspect they begin earlier than usual this year, for I never experienced greater heat than we have had for some days past. I will tantalize you, Belmont, for your profane suspicions.

Now, be it known to all men, and women too, (for I don't see why they should be excluded from knowledge) that before I go to a place of public amusement I endeavour to find out who, and who, are to be there; and then set my wits to work to recollect all my respectable friends and acquaintance, that I may discover if any

of them are known to those, I wish to be introduced to. Should it so happen that I do not see any worth my trouble, I let them all pass on in regular succession as shadows before the sun.

Excuse the comparison, Belmont, I am on tiptoe to day. My plan I found of excellent use in procuring me an introduction to Sir James Mitford. Here it stopped. But with the lady in question my good fortune befriended me. The first ball, since I have been at Brighton, was by subscription, three evenings since. The dancing had begun when we entered the ball room; and Lord Darnly was going down with the most lovely woman I ever beheld. Such elegance, and grace in every motion, that the set, lost in admiration, absolutely forgot their part in the amusement, and continued motionless 'till Lord Darnly proudly led his partner to a seat.—"Who is that beautiful girl?—lovely creature!" in loud whispers from the men. And,

" A Miss Melville, the protegé of Lady Mitford;" was sharply answered by a little quizzical Dorothy Dumps. I think Miss Melville heard those involuntary bursts of admiration, as she begged Lord Darnly to excuse her standing up the second dance. I got near enough to hear this. A lady challenged his lordship to go down the next dance with her, which I believe he would rather have declined, but being engaged to Miss Montague for the next set, he was compelled to accept her ladyship's proffered hand, which I dare say he might have retained for life, if he had chosen to accept it. Lady Louisa Moreton is not troubled with any of those retired notions of female delicacy, that, " is not to be won, unsought." —No; she will seek, and follow up her man, 'till she fairly hunts him into her toils, without having the least attachment for the object of her pursuit. Darnly has however a shield that will resist her shafts at this time, being deeply in love with one the very re-

verse of her ladyship. Lord Darnly, rising to accompany her, left Miss Melville chatting to Sir James Mitford. I took the vacant seat, which I had not occupied five minutes before the fastening of a large portrait, under which, Miss Melville was sitting, gave way, and would probably have seriously injured my lovely neighbour, had I not broken the force by extending my arm to receive it. My left wrist was at first supposed to be fractured; in reality it was violently sprained and bruised. Miss Melville expressed so much concern for the injury I had received, and gratitude for the service I had rendered her, and I felt myself so exhilarated by her enviable acknowledgements, that I thought at the time, if I had broken every bone in my skin (neck excepted) I should have been amply repaid. I except my neck, because I have a particular affection for that little vehicle of life.

This accident interrupted the dancing. Lord Darnly, with the anxiety

of a lover, flew to the spot, regardless of his gay companion, or any other part of the company, but the interesting individual who had so fortunately escaped. But I thought he looked rather askew at me for being the happy man, who had saved Miss Melville from mischief.

Sir James and Lady Mitford were profuse in their thanks, of all shapes, and all sizes. The baronet, who is formality itself embodied, gave me his card, and an invitation to join a small party the following evening. This was too flattering to be refused, though I was in so much pain I was obliged to quit the field. Sir James called on me the next morning to inquire after my hurt. He then invited me to dine with him, to meet Mr. Montague, who first introduced me to the baronet.

Tell me, my friend, when we are to expect you. I hope you will arrive before the Mitford's quit Brighton, which will be sometime in August. If this letter does not open thine eyes, put

them out; and leave me to trip up. Darnly to make way for myself.

LETTER II.

MISS MELVILLE TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Brighton, July 1, 1813.

I WAS exceedingly grieved, my dear Maria, to hear you had been ill. As I had no answer to my last letter, I suspected that perhaps I had given you a wrong direction.

Our time, I assure you, we spend very pleasantly, though I think our circle is too much enlarged. I am, you well know, passionately fond of music; and happy to contribute my little skill, either by playing or singing, but when the hearers very far exceed the number of performers, it too much resembles a public concert, and consequently loses its genuine intention;—that of meeting to amuse each other.

The mild approbation of dear Mr. Ashbourne for one of his favorite airs is a thousand times more gratifying to me, than all the flattery and adulation of those, I am almost constantly with.

My good friends Sir James and Lady Mitford are delighted with, and encourage the attentions Lord Darnly pays me. He is undoubtedly a very agreeable young man; and I often wish I could conquer my partiality for one, who has no other regard for me, than as the protectress of his child. I use every argument in my power to erase him from my mind; but in vain are all the efforts I can make, or friends suggest, to restore me to my former indifference.

Lady Mitford requests me not to be too hasty in my resolves to refuse their young friend, and I entreat her not to encourage his visits so far as they may be considered to be on my account.

A colonel Yorke too is added to our party. I am under obligations to him for saving me from being crushed by a

ponderous portrait and frame, which would have fallen on me in the ball room, had not the colonel, by his gallantry, prevented it, by receiving the whole force upon himself.

Sir James had that evening been introduced to the colonel; and now, from the service he has rendered me, he has a general invitation. Nor does he appear at all backward in accepting their civilities. He is frequently here, and we find him a lively pleasant acquaintance. There is something in his manner that I don't exactly understand; and I am often distressed by his scrutinizing looks. They are not lover like, you may believe me. He is conscious that he does distress me, as he then smiles, and throws out some pleasantry to pass it off.

I abruptly left you, my dear Maria, to attend Lady Mitford, who sent for me. On entering the drawing room, Sir James, who was also there, requested my attention for a few minutes. His manner petrified me. " My dear

sir," I cried, "by this preface you alarm me. Any bad news from Portugal?" Sir James shook his head; and I burst into tears.—"Your mission, Sir James," said Lady Mitford, "is useless. My dear Emily, I am shocked by your distress, which is entirely occasioned by your too apprehensive mind. Sir James, my love, has heard no ill news, unless the worthy son of a nobleman, soliciting the hand of our dear Emily, can be called such." Surprised, and ashamed of my own folly, I covered my face with my hands; and, without uttering a syllable, ran up to my own apartment.

Lady Mitford soon followed me; and smiling, as she took my hand,—"My dear Emily; what answer is Sir James to return to Lord Darnly?"—"O! anything he can think of; but I cannot receive his visits."—"Not if he brings news from Portugal?" wickedly asked her ladyship. "O! spare my folly, my dear madam; I am indeed sufficiently mortified to have exposed

myself, as I have done this day."—"I must confess, my dear, that Sir James's solemnity was enough to cause you to suppose some dreadful accident had happened, though I did not expect you to go so far as Portugal to meet it. And I had flattered myself that an offer so unobjectionable would have met with your approbation."—"My dear Lady Mitford," I replied, "Lord Darnly has a father, who would never consent to his son's making so unsuitable a choice."—"If that is the only obstacle to be surmounted, it is what can easily be removed."—"O! no," I cried, "I have others; indeed, I cannot receive Lord Darnly as a lover; and I must beg Sir James will acquaint him with my unalterable determination, though I am fully sensible of the honor of such an alliance, which is so far above my pretensions, or deserts."—"Do not say so, my love," cried Lady Mitford, "there is no situation my Emily may not aspire to; and do honor to the man who places her there." I

could only press her hand to my lips; and in silence express that gratitude, my tongue refused to utter.

Now, Maria, you will laugh at the vanity of your friend, who could relate such an instance of Lady Mitford's partiality. I should not have ventured to repeat her flattering compliment, but as I am sensible it was kindly intended, to counteract an insult designedly pointed at me, as we were walking on the Marine Parade last evening. I heard it; and felt it too. My name we distinctly heard, coupled with the appellation of "Lady Mitford's protegè; governess to her granddaughter;" and answered by one, who seemed to know something of me.—"She was brought up on the charity of Mrs. Melmoth, of Melmoth Park; —aimed at marrying Sir Charles Belmont. It did not take." This last allegation affected me beyond expression. We were retarded in our progress by two young men, who appeared tipsy; and, crossing from side to

to extricate her from her wretched situation I was utterly at a loss. One of the women, who seemed more kindly disposed towards the fair fugitive, informed me she was very much to be pitied; and not deserving the opprobious epithets, which were so freely bestowed upon her by her enemy.

I succeeded in persuading the poor girl to take a little of the refreshment, which she had for sometime declined, weeping most bitterly. So entirely was she overcome by her misfortunes, that I found it would be useless to inquire how I could serve her, if I had no plan to propose; and a thought occurred, which I immediately put in execution. This was to place her in a convent as a temporary asylum; and, being not more than two miles from Vittoria, where there are several, this could be effected. I proposed it to her.---"Oh! thank you; thank you, sir!" she cried with clasped hands, "hide me; send me to any place, where I may not be exposed to the vil-

lainy of your sex, or the cruel insults of my own. I am a poor orphan, deceived, and deserted; but indeed, sir, I am not vicious." For the first time did she look up; and I saw her face had a death-like paleness spread over it, and which in health and happiness no doubt was very pretty. Sorrow had reduced her form; and her wan and hollow cheek scarcely left a trace of what she had been. I wrote with my pencil a few lines on the back of a letter to my friend Smith; and enclosed the brooch, which I requested he would give to Miss Greenfield; and desired he would procure her admission into a convent, as a boarder, 'till he has an opportunity of sending her safely to England.

I placed her on the mule; and sent my man with her. She was so extremely weak, that I was afraid she would be unable to retain her seat. Her tormentor could not let her depart without reminding her of her unhappy situation,—"You may thank me, Miss,

for the notice this gemman has taken of you: he would not have seen you but for me. You will be better off now than you was before the count gave you the go bye."

From a little narrative, she has sent me since, I find that this unfortunate girl was married to a French emigrant count, as the woman in the booth said, many years older than herself; that he had formerly married a Spanish lady, who chose to return to her friends, when they were obliged to leave France. The count came to England, and with others of his countrymen lived at Sommers Town, where he became acquainted with Miss Greenfield, and married her.

In about a year after this event, Joseph Bonaparte, being declared by his brother king of Spain, the count went over to join his party, for which his wife's family had declared themselves.

The motive for his quitting England was not explained to the injured girl;

who being sincerely attached to the man she considered as her husband, did not doubt that he would gladly receive her, if she could procure a passage to him. This she effected; and informing the count of her arrival, he wrote back a few lines disowning all knowledge of her; said she was an impostor; and advised her to quit the country. She could not believe what she read, and went to the house where she supposed he was only a visitor; and inquired for him. The moment he saw her, he inhumanly ordered the servant to turn her into the street, and if she again came there to have her apprehended by the police.

Having a little money, she endeavered to get a conveyance to the English army, in the hope of meeting with some compassionate female to rescue her from the destruction that threatened her. This she despaired of effecting, when a humane priest took her under his guidance; and walked with her 'till they came in

absorbed in the passion for plunder; and with that spirit they traverse the field of battle to rob the dead, or even the dying, whether friend or foe. I had ample opportunity of seeing an instance of the most disgusting traffic in this species of plunder. In a field, I had occasion to pass, I observed a kind of booth erected, about which there appeared a number of women, whom I concluded to be, as I found they were, soldiers' wives. While I was considering what their situation might be, a mule heavily laden, without rider, or driver, was grazing by the road side. I made my servant examine the contents of the burthen, and found it consisted of provisions. Upon this, I entered the field, bidding my man follow with the mule; and having alighted, I went among them. I enquired if they wanted provisions. "Och! and to be sure we do;" cried an Irishwoman. "Bless your honor for this supply." "Thank you, sir, we have not tasted food to-day."

Though they might not have had eatables, by the empty bottle displayed, liquor had not been scarce. A heap of shirts, caps, and jackets lay in one corner of the booth. Some women, disregarding the spoil, were weeping for their husbands. Others, and by far the greater number, were looking over and comparing the trinkets taken from the slain.---"Here is a brave brooch, your honor, will you be pleased to give a trifle for it? It was not taken from a dead man, I can tell you. I will sell it to any one but she;" pointing to a female in a distant part of the booth. I took the brooch in my hand, which was of peculiar beauty; and I became the purchaser, with the intention of presenting it to the person, to whom I conceived it would be of most value to. And I was rather anxious to know why the only woman of decent appearance should be so entirely neglected by the rest. I desired one of the women to carry her some of the provisions. She replied, "It's of no

manner of use, sir; she wont do any thing a body may wish her. She does nothing but cry, cry, cry, for ever; so we have left her to herself. And to tell you the truth, sir, she has no business here; for she has lost no husband, nor has one to lose." I went up to speak to her; but she was so absorbed in her own reflections, that she made no answer to my request that she would take something. She was dressed in a habit covered with dust, as were her black beaver hat and feather, which entirely shaded that side of her face next to me. "Ah! there! (cried the woman of whom I bought the brooch) I suppose madam will talk, now a fine gentleman is comed among us." And stepping up to her, rudely laid her hand upon her shoulder. "Come, miss, look up, and shew your face; here is a handsomer man than your French count, and, may be, has no wife to flout you." The poor insulted girl fell apparently lifeless to the ground. I bid the barbarous wretch

leave her to those, who appeared more compassionate; and assisted in restoring her to life and misery. But, even during her insensibility, the unfeeling monster continued her invectives. "I know her of old," she cried, "the count took a great liking to my Kate 'till this baby-faced minx popped herself in at Sommers Town; then who but she! And she was only a milliner's apprentice after all, though she looks like a lady. A pretty take in, to be sure, it was; and here she comed after her husband, as she says; but it is no such thing, for the man has a wife here already, and wont own this Miss Thing-a-me. Greenfield she used to be called, before the count pretended to marry her. And, now the French are all run away, she has the impudence to come amongst us honest women."

By this woman's harangue, I understood the misfortune of this poor girl to be her marriage to a French emigrant, who was already married. How

side of the Parade, we found it difficult to pass. Colonel Yorke soon opened a passage for us. Being just behind me, he had heard the ladies pour forth the effusions of their little minds. One of the party was Lady Louisa Moreton. Colonel Yorke expressed so much warmth on the occasion, as quite alarmed me: some of his expressions had surprised both Lady Mitford and myself. I do think him sometimes very strange.

We are to leave Brighton early in August; but the dear Seymours are coaxing their uncle to stay here another month. Lady Mitford declares she will remain neuter. I shall go to Mrs. Syms, at Tunbridge Wells; and stay with her 'till she returns to Reading. But I am now so delighted with this charming place, that I feel no anxiety to leave it. My spirits are much better; and we have so select a society of our own, that we seem like a very large family, and the evenings, we don't go to the rooms, or the thea-

tre, we pass either at Mr. Montague's, or Sir James Mitford's.

I long to see little Emily; and wish I had brought her and nurse with me. The good woman sends me word, she is *coming on* surprisingly. Evans is quite happy, she tells me; and I feel comfortable to have her about me.

Adieu.

Your affectionate

E. MELVILLE.

LETTER III.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Sabijana de Alva, June 23, 1813.

My dear Yorke,

THIS letter will have the honor to accompany the dispatches giving an account of a glorious victory, obtained by the allied army under the command of Lord Wellington, in front

of Vittoria. The enemy were completely put to the rout; and we took from them one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, four hundred and fifteen waggons of ammunition, all their baggage, provisions, cattle, treasure, and a great number of prisoners.

I need not detail to you the particulars of an affair so interesting to every Englishman, and which you will see published in the gazette, with a melancholy list of the killed and wounded of our brave countrymen and their allies. The colours of the 4th battalion of the 100th regiment, and Marshal Jourdan's batton of a Marshal of France, were taken by the 87th regiment, and will be sent by Lord Wellington's aid decamp the brave Captain Freemantle. You are, I know, particularly interested for the 87th; and will be concerned to hear your friend Captain Vandeleur O'Brien is severely wounded. Joseph Bonaparte commanded the army with Marshal Jourdan; and they are now making their retreat into

France. Lord Wellington and the allies following them.

I am sent to Sabijana de Alva. On my road hither I had fresh cause to wish my fair countrywomen would be content to remain in the bosom of their own families, and not expose themselves, not only to the greatest inconvenience, but frequently to situations highly improper for women of delicacy to witness; and which nothing but imperious necessity, similar to that of Mrs. Mansfield, can excuse.

The bodies of two well dressed English women were found among the slain. Both of them, in too great a state of agitation to remain in a place of safety, rushed into the midst of the battle, and were trampled to death by the impetuosity of the troops then in the heat of action. Their names I have not heard; and probably their husbands may have shared the same fate.

As for the wives of the privates, few of them retain any feeling; it is wholly

sight of the English army; and directed her where he thought she might meet with some protection. He then left her, and she proceeded; though terrified almost to death, and exhausted by fatigue.

She wandered about for some time, when the officer of a small detachment passing by, directed her to the spot then in view; when, seeing the booth and the women, she went in; but had scarcely entered before she was recognized by one of them, who had formerly been employed by the family she lived with, previous to her unfortunate marriage.

This account of Miss Greenfield, sent by my servant, was accompanied by a letter from Smith, who adds, that the lady, I wished to recommend as a boarder, he believed would not long survive her misfortunes; for, if he had any discernment, death had already laid his iron hand upon his victim. It is my consolation that I have done the best I can to save her.

I am disappointed in not hearing from you; but, as fresh troops are expected from England, your regiment may perhaps be included; and I hope I shall not be so unfortunate as to miss seeing you. The same determination respecting Emily Melville still prevails over every objection, that can be urged against it. I will not therefore repeat what to me appears sufficient to justify my conduct to myself, though to the world it may afford many wise observations on my folly.

A letter from you, dated Brighton. Am I in my senses? Or are you out of yours? I am not, cannot be, such a vile dupe as you describe me; and had you seen the anonymous letter I found at my lodgings in town, and the one that I have had since, I should be exonerated, even by you, from being too credulous.

I am now impatient to return. I hope your letter is not intended to try the strength of my attachment for Emily. You hint at being charmed

with her yourself. What man that sees her is not? But, Henry, you must not trifle with me. I have already suffered inconceivable misery. Do not therefore inflict another torture to those I have, and am still enduring. And 'till I am dismissed I cannot quit my post; though I think there is very little doubt I shall be in England the first or second week in August.

As I am only employed in a civil capacity, I shall be sent to England the moment I have accomplished the business I am on. If you are not embarked, as you do not seem to expect to be, I request you to contrive that I may have a letter from you on my landing at Portsmouth, Farewell.

LETTER IV.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO MISS MELVILLE.

Bath, August 3, 1813.

My dear Emily,

YOU accuse me of becoming lazy. Not so I assure you; but I am

rather disposed to be a good wife. The work of reformation has ever been considered by me as a work of great labour, and takes much time to effect; hence it is I have not so much employment for my pen, or time to use it, as in my reprobate state. I have brought myself to the determination that no woman shall be so agreeable to my husband as myself. I study his taste in dress. What he seems to admire, I adopt. The amusements he approves of are for that reason most agreeable to me. I am attentive when he converses with me; and suffer no one to withdraw that attention from him while he is speaking. Brensly is, I declare, more the lover now, than when we were first married. My dear father's glistening eye tells me he approves my conduct. How was this wonderful miracle produced, you cry? That word contempt, you so unmercifully conjured up against me, acted like a talisman upon my senses; and I racked my poor head to recollect all

the prognostics, precautions, dangers, and precipices, my father and my friends had had the goodness to bestow upon me, as a bridal present. All these would have been blown to the winds, had not those gay widows, and your alarm, given me a new set of ideas. I resolved to keep my husband to myself; and I have every reason to think I shall succeed, if I persevere. As long as I can make him believe he is the first of men, I am sure he will allow his wife, for her discovery, to be the first of women. Remember that, Emily; it is an excellent prescription; and deserves a place among your most valuable ornaments, though recommended by a younger woman, your half reformed, and giddy friend.

Have you any vacancy in your nursery? I may perhaps contribute to its fame. I shall direct this to Brighton, not being certain that you have left that place. Take no notice of what

I have written to day: to-morrow the moon changes; I may change also; Though ever your's,

M. BRENSLY.

LETTER V.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO LADY MITFORD.

August 4, 1813.

My dear Madam,

I HAVE been so extremely shocked this morning by an unexpected visit from Lord Headly, that I cannot retire to rest 'till I have relieved my mind by acquainting your ladyship with the purport of his lordship's visit, and the extraordinary conversation that passed between us.

I was alone when Lord Headly was announced. On entering the room he was evidently embarrassed. I begged him to be seated; and inquired to what

cause I might attribute the honor of his lordship's visit. "I ought, madam, to apologize for this intrusion; but the anxiety of a father for the honor of a beloved son will, I hope, with Mrs. Brensly plead my excuse." I bowed, but was all amazement; and he continued. "You are, or were acquainted with a young person, whom Mrs. Melmoth, of Melmoth Park, patronized to the exclusion of her nearest relations; that is, from her society, for I understand the validity of Mrs. Melmoth's will could not be established in the person's favor." "Your lordship means Miss Melville, I presume." I began to feel very indignant during this preface; and he answered my question,—"The same," adding, "You have dropped all correspondence with her no doubt."—"My lord!" I exclaimed, "dropped correspondence with my dearest friend! For heaven's sake, explain what you can mean by such a supposition!"—"Are you then, Mrs. Brensly,

ignorant that Miss Melville stands not so high in the opinion of the world as she did a few months since?"—"I must entreat your lordship not to keep me in suspence: I cannot support it." "I should not," he replied, "have intruded on, or wounded your feelings by reflections on any friend of yours; but having a son, whose future prospects in life must be deeply injured by uniting himself to a young woman of doubtful character."—"Doubtful character!" I exclaimed; "who dares asperse the character of Miss Melville? If there is one woman upon earth, to whom perfection can be applied, it is to Emily Melville."

This eulogium on Emily Lord Headly took no notice of; but went on.—"My son, Lord Darnly, saw Miss Melville first at Bath; and renewing his acquaintance with her at Brighton, became attached to her. He wrote for my permission to offer her his hand, referring me to Sir James Mitford for any particulars I might wish

to be informed of. I did not, at first, recollect who the lady was; and wrote as Darnly had requested. Sir James, for reasons best known to himself, took no notice of my letter; but, in a few posts, Lady Mitford sent me that kind of answer, which she judged most likely to provide for Miss Melville, and free herself from an incumbrance."

I rose with an intention of quitting the room; but to leave my dear Emily's character thus defamed again fixed me in my seat; and I resolved Lord Headly should be further explicit.—"And yet your lordship gave your consent to this disgraceful union?"—"I did, madam, before I was informed of the particulars, with which I have since been made acquainted. And even had Miss Melville been fully entitled to all the merit Lady Mitford was pleased to give her, it could not be a desirable connection for Lord Darnly. But as I had suffered so much in my youth by being

separated from the woman, to whom I was tenderly attached, I was unwilling to thwart my son. At the same time, I never will consent to his bringing into the family one, whose character will not endure a scrutiny; and I have written him word to this effect. He is incredulous; and still persists in the preposterous design of marrying Miss Melville. I therefore apply to you, madam, and Mr. Ashbourne, to second my endeavours, by representing to Miss Melville that she never can be recieved in my family. I shall myself caution Lady Mitford not to pursue her unworthy conduct any further, by encouraging a young nobleman to unite himself to one, who must disgrace him, and"— "For heaven's sake! my lord," I cried, "cease your declamations, if you do not mean to kill me. Be satisfied, my lord; for I can assure you that Miss Melville will never intrude herself into your family, not one of whom, I would venture my life on it, is deserving of such a relation."

I burst into a flood of tears. His lordship expressed much concern upon seeing me thus affected. When a little recovered, I begged him to excuse my warmth, and told him that Miss Melville had rejected Lord Darnly, and never had encouraged him to think he would be accepted. Lord Headly's pride was wounded. He reddened almost to purple. I believe all the blood in his veins mounted into his bacchanalian cheeks.—"Lord Darnly refused! rejected! by a—a"— "A country curate's daughter. I will assist your lordship."—"You may be mistaken, Mrs. Brensly; though the young woman in question was the reputed daughter of a clergyman, there are those in existence, who think differently."—"Your lordship can have no objection to see my father, whose veracity no human being ever doubted; and I am sure he can speak to the birth of Miss Melville; both her parents being well known to him. Mr. Melville was the dearest friend my

father ever had; and he doats upon Emily; and whatever your lordship may have heard against the character of Miss Melville, it is, I assure you, without foundation: and, in justice to that dear friend, I have a right to insist upon knowing the authors of such base calumny. Even Mrs. Howard, who, I know, was not friendly disposed towards Miss Melville, even she would have scorned to blacken the character of this excellent young woman." Lord Headly looked quite astonished. "Indeed, Mrs. Brensly, I feel it incumbent on me, for my own sake to inform you what grounds I have gone upon. I never was a defamer; and this letter will, I trust, fully exculpate me from any intention of caluminating the lady in question; but, to save my son from disgracing himself and family, I have exposed myself to your displeasure; which I hope will subside when you have perused this."

I took the letter; and I am sure

your ladyship will concur with me in excusing Lord Headly's harsh conclusions against even our dear Emily, so artfully, as well as maliciously, was it drawn up. It began, as most mischief does, with strong professions of good design, though the most diabolical injury was in contemplation. The signature is that of poor Dr. Syms. The writer says, that, from his great respect to Lord Headly, he feels himself under the necessity of acquainting his lordship, that his son is forming a connection with a young woman, whose great impropriety of conduct had rendered her unworthy to rank with the respectable part of her own sex; consequently not eligible for the wife of the son of a nobleman, who was an honor to his country. That Sir James and Lady Mitford, anxious to get her disposed of, countenanced her, when at a distance from the spot, in which her misconduct was well known; and this was done by her ladyship fearing Sir James might be indu-

ced to make a handsome provision for her and her infant to the injury of his legitimate son. Miss Melville's continuance in his, Dr. Syms's house, after the birth of her child, might appear extraordinary to his lordship; but this he was compelled to submit to from the painful necessity arising from embarrassed circumstances; though he should be better pleased if Sir James would take his daughter and her infant to some other place, since he could not be insensible to the danger his own daughters were exposed to by the example and society of so artful a young woman.

This was the substance of the Doctor's letter. I was all astonishment at the fabricator of such vile falsehoods. Yet the palming dear Emily on Sir James for his daughter was too ludicrous not to excite my risibility. This made Lord Headly impatient to know my sentiments; and on my returning the letter, he eagerly said, "Well, madam; what is your opinion of Miss

Melville now?"—"Exactly, my lord, the same as it ever was. And as for that letter, it is, I will undertake to convince you, a forgery; with not one line of truth in it. Dr. Syms has the highest opinion of Miss Melville, whom he almost adores. Not one of that family, but would be perfectly miserable, if they knew the name of Syms had been made use of to strengthen such a cruel imputation, with a view to injure so admirable a young woman. The part Sir James and Lady Mitford bear in this precious scroll they will despise and laugh at; and I very much question, my lord, if the letter ever was at Reading."

Lord Headly started at this suggestion, as bearing hard upon his want of discernment; and taking out the letter to convince me of my error, the Clapham post-mark was on it; and Reading, with the date, within. He was thunderstruck. "And now, my lord," I cried, "as I have had, I will not say the patience, but the consideration for

you, to hear your accusation and evidence in support of it, I hope you will indulge me with hearing the vindication and explanation, which I have it in my power to give. Lord Headly bowed assent; and I continued; "As for Miss Melville being the child of any other than my father's friend, it is too absurd to give it a thought. Here are two letters (taking them from my secretary) which I request your lordship to peruse, and return to me. If these do not remove every stain from Miss Melville's character, sooner than that dear friend shall continue under such calumny, I will entreat Dr. Syms to come to Bath, that your lordship may hear that good man's account of the affair, which is the ground work of so nefarious a plot."

Lord Headly, anxious to read the letters, took leave; but returned again in about two hours with them; and thanked me for them, observing he was well convinced of the innocence of Miss Melville. And, so much in-

terested is he in favor of my injured friend, that he declares himself her champion; and ready at any time to assist in discovering and punishing the insidious traducer of so exemplary a character.

Richard's travels greatly diverted his lordship. I requested him not to mention the purport of the letter, pretending to be from Dr. Syms, because, if that became public, it would not only be promoting the object of the author, to defame Miss Melville; but also operate against our discovering the wretch, who penned it. And I think, my dear madam, it will be a kindness to spare Emily the knowledge of this mortifying transaction.

My father, who is all goodness himself, comforts me. He bids me not dwell on the manifest design against Emily, who he assures me will yet shine forth in her native brightness to the confusion of her enemies and exultation of her friends. I rejoice Mr. Brensly was not at home; for had

he heard one tittle of his lordship's business here, he would not have escaped from some severe effects from the resentment of my husband.

I direct this to Mitford Hall, where I suppose you are arrived, as Emily informed me you intended leaving Brighton early in August.

Adieu, my dear madam,

and believe me your ladyship's

attached friend,

M. BRENSLY.

LETTER VI.

COL. YORKE TO SIR CHARLES BELMONT.

Brighton, August 16, 1813.

IN the hope, my dear Belmont, this may meet you at Portsmouth, I have committed my letter to the care of a friend, who has promised to watch for your arrival, which by the papers,

I know is daily expected. I suppose I am to have my skull blown to atoms, or my ribs pierced, whether I speak of Miss Melville, or decline the subject. But, as I was going to dine at Sir James Mitford's when I last wrote, it would not have been civil to leave you at the door just in sight of a fine turtle, and a haunch of venison, &c. &c. so tempting to a poor fellow like yourself, that has a dinner one day, and two days goes without.

Faith, Belmont, you must look about you, or you will be distanced. The handsome Darnly is hovering about your goddess. His lordship never fails to secure a seat next Miss Melville. I cannot say decidedly that she encourages his attentions. Her manners are so truly polite to all, that, though she must be conscious of being the object of general admiration, she is far from presuming that every man, who looks at her, is in love with her; or that she will be considered as giving an encouragement to all, whom she is civil to.

Come, Belmont; and shew your woe-begone phiz. I think the angel of pity will not overlook you in your penitentials; and, for your comfort, I can tell you, you have still a place in her remembrance; as, by a mistake the other evening, she called me Sir Charles. To be sure, you are not the only Sir Charles in the universe; and as she did not add *Belmont*, I am not obliged to insist that you only could be meant. You may draw what conclusions best please you. I may do the same. I carelessly asked, "what Sir Charles?" I did not see any one in the room bearing that appellation. No answer to my question;—but her beautiful face became suffused by a blush, that rather added to, than diminished, its native charms. I took no farther notice of her mistake than by an inquiring glance, the force of which she felt; and, quitting her seat took the arm of a young friend, and went to look over a party who were at cards. I followed her with my eye,

and was well convinced the passing amusement afforded her none.

I rather suspect you are not in high favor with Sir James, whatever you may be with Miss Melville. I judge so from a circumstance that occurred the day I dined there with a party of professed admirers, not of Miss Melville, or the charming Montagues, or the lively young Seymours; no, they were the admirers of the callipash and callipee of a poor unfortunate turtle, brought four thousand miles in a state of misery; and this to please the pampered appetite of man,---of a christian too, the professor, though too seldom the practiser, of humanity; which, in my opinion, extends to every creature that has life. The poor victim was inspected, day after day, by those who were invited to partake of the delicious treat; and one lanky Jonathan, I do believe, did not eat for three days before, for fear of spoiling his appetite. I can compare such a group to nothing more delicate than my father's hounds;

and I am sure, upon these occasions, we very much resemble the canine species. Possessed by such an idea, I could not but admire the above said hungry Jonathan;—while he was lapping up his soup, his eyes were devouring the fine haunch of venison.

"What has this dissertation to do with me?" you cry. Oh! an infinite deal I assure you; for to the turtle and venison you were indebted for an introduction. After the ladies had left us, an old gentleman that was acquainted with your father, when the dressing of the turtle, and fine flavour of the venison came under discussion, declared he had not enjoyed so luxurious a dinner since he had dined with Sir William Belmont, at Sunny Vale. Your expedition to Portugal and Spain succeeded the venison and turtle; and many encomiums were bestowed on your political conduct, as well as the dishes we had lately dispatched. I was too proud of the just panegyric of my friend, not to

chime in. Sir James is never lavish in his commendations of any, but his cook, and Miss Melville; in truth the latter is much indebted to the former for keeping his stomach in good humour, or I question even if that lady would please him. On my speaking of you, Sir James asked me if Sir Charles Belmont was my friend. I exultingly answered in the affirmative. Sir James's brows contracted 'till his wig advanced almost over them; and, ever since, he has been cooler in his civilities to me.

I think I have been hitherto a faithful friend; and, notwithstanding your posture of defiance, and coming from the land of fire and smoke, hurling death and destruction upon those, who may happen to sneeze or cough at a time not agreeable to your feelings, yet I can wish you success with Emily, provided you leave your jealous fancies with the Portuguese and Spaniards; a weed natural to their soil, but for your own sake as well as Emily's, bring it not to England.

LETTER VII.

HON. GEORGE BRENSLY TO MRS. BRENSLY

Montgomery, August 13, 1813.

NOW, my beloved Maria, you are not to be looking out for another husband, because I returned not at the time you expected me. For fear of such an accident, I write to assure you I am yet in the land of the living, though I have been in some danger of a hasty dissolution. The chaise wheel broke; and we were overturned in a miserable dirty lane. The horses were tired; and in consequence of this we were benighted. However, we neither of us were hurt, though in a deplorable situation. No house, nor assistance to be procured: Cleveland's servant said, he saw a light at a distance. We posted him off; and to add to our

distress, a violent shower, or rather a torrent of rain came on. We had exerted ourselves to get the chaise up; and having supported it with the broken wheel, we sat in state 'till Joseph returned; and with him the occupier of the house where the light was seen, and a servant with a lanthorn and umbrellas accompanied him. Mr. White very civilly invited us to his house, as he said it was not possible to have the chaise repaired, no wheelwright being within five miles, or carriage to be had nearer. We had no alternative but to accept his invitation, or sit in the chaise all night; and perhaps the greater part of the next day. We followed the good man to his house, which has been the mansion of some respectable family, though now converted into a farm house, and rented by Mr. White. Mrs. White was as civil as her husband, with more suavity of manners. She had a good fire to dry our wet garments; and some comfortable refreshments soon were set

before us, which we found very acceptable.

Our host had a quaker-like appearance; about the age of fifty. He was so good as to entertain us, during our repast, with a variety of wonderful and marvellous accidents and escapes, that had happened to himself and his acquaintance; with a dash of superstition to garnish them, and fix the attention of his auditors. Nor did it fail of its effect on his wife, who frequently looked aghast, and drew her chair nearer her husband.

The variety of accommodations and amusements for children made me inquire if we were not to see the little cherubs. All children, you know, Maria, are so to their parents. I was told they were gone to bed and asleep, just as one little fellow cried lustily from a distant part of the house. Louder and louder did he exalt his voice, as he drew nearer to the room we were in. He was brought to his mother by a pretty rosy cheeked girl,

who, I suspect, made the child cry to have an opportunity to see, and be seen. Aminadab has no objection to look at a pretty girl, as his little twinkling grey eyes discovered. These good people put themselves to great inconvenience for our accommodation, as we had frequent hints of from our host. Mrs. White and her girls (except one) occupied one bed; as did Mr. White and the boys another, that Howard and myself should have separate apartments.

You will think your husband a shocking fellow for telling tales out of school; but as the house in question has a tale of mystery attached to it, no wonder I should be alive to the noises of nocturnal visitors. Just as the clock had struck the awful hour of one, I heard something glide past my door. Thinking Cleveland was ill, I jumped out of bed, and softly opening my door, who should I descry but old marvel, creeping along the passage, in his night-gown, without shoes; and

lighted by a small lamp he had in his hand. When arrived at the door of a distant apartment, he vanished. Having satisfied himself all was safe, he came shuffling back before I had closed my door. I again retired to my bed, and to sleep, from which I was awoke by Howard's telling me it was a fine morning; that breakfast was in the parlour; all the children were whipped, and washed, ready to receive their guest. I soon joined them; and, with the salutation of the morning, Mrs. White hoped I had had pleasant dreams. So unexpected an address I was not prepared for; and therefore made no answer, but took my seat at the breakfast table. With the first cup of tea Mrs. White began to examine the sediment at the bottom of her own cup; and after turning it about in a variety of directions she smiled, as having found out what she wished to be solved in. "Now, only look in my cup, Mr, White; it is your very self, just as you appeared in my dream last

night. I thought I saw you, my dear, walk across my chamber in your gown. You seemed to light your lamp, and take great care not to wake us."—"Poh! Poh! Winifred, don't let us hear any of your dreams this morning; the gentlemen's cups are empty." Little Ruth innocently asked, "Mamma, Mamma, did you see papa when it was all dark?" Mamma was employed in pouring out our tea. The eldest girl began to cry most woefully; and trembled in every limb. Her mother alarmed by the agitation of poor Bridget, demanded the cause of her lamentations. The girl, between a sob and a hiccough, blubbered out, "Oh! my papa is going to die; I know he is, for I am sure I saw his ghost last night in our room. I thought too he spoke; and I believe Ann was frightened, as she got up and locked the door." I was sufficiently convinced that if my friend Aminadab's wife was a dreamer of dreams, and saw visions, her husband could interpret them.

Breakfast being over, we held a council what was next to be done. Mr. White was very pressing for our remaining there that day; indeed his civility was somewhat troublesome. We left our servants there 'till the chaise wheel could be repaired, and took their horses on to Tan-y-Bwlch, where we waited till the next day. We had been consulting in what way we could remunerate Mr. and Mrs. White for their accommodation. Joseph's arrival put an end to our difficulty. A note from our late entertainer very modestly made a demand more exorbitant than the most expensive inn in England. The hypocrisy of the wretch was what provoked me; and, no doubt, he keeps the road in a bad state for the very purpose of inconveniencing travellers, and taking them in. We are at last arrived at Montgomery, from whence we shall steer our course on to Shrewsbury.

Tell Harriet, Howard has twice mentioned her; but I will not mortify her

by repeating what he said. Maria, don't be shocked, and I will freely acknowledge you are too necessary to my happiness for any society to afford me pleasure without you; and I am anxious to be blest with hearing the sweet voice of my beloved wife. And your father is no less dear to me than to his Maria. I hope to be with you in three days after you receive this from your affectionate, and

faithful husband,

G. BRENSLY.

LETTER VIII.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Portsmouth, August 15, 1813.

ONCE more does your friend Belmont breathe the air of his native country. Happy England! that can alone enjoy freedom, peace, and safety, from the ravages of destructive war.

In her humble cottages, as well as in the abode of the great, security is ensured by her mild, equal and efficient laws, imparted to the peasant, as well as the prince.

What a contrast to the scene of blood and slaughter I have so lately witnessed! Fields uncultivated or the crops trodden down! Cottages deserted by the wretched owners! Let victory declare for whom it may, individual misery is not to be avoided. How few of my country women are there, who have the heroism to rejoice with the public over the ashes of a husband, father, or son!

A melancholy instance of the want of fortitude to bear up under the inevitable evils of war occurred upon my landing here, about an hour since. A great concourse of people were collected on the beach, anxious to hear the news; but the foremost, and the most conspicuous, was a tall, well-dressed young woman, with three children. Her anxiety would scarcely

allow her to keep out of the water, as she saw a young man in the boat, whom she knew, and by whom she expected a letter. Nor was she decieved; for, the moment he landed, he gave her one. Her impatience to read the contents admitted of no delay; and, breaking the seal with trembling hands, she could not have read more than a line, when the letter suddenly dropped from her hand, and the most piercing shrieks rent the air for her husband, who was killed in the valley of Bastan. The youngest child she franticly caught up in her arms, attempting to run up the full, in a state of mind bordering on distraction. Her limbs became nerveless; and she fell, insensible, with her infant, on the shingles.

Some of the people, who knew her, got a chair; and carried her home; followed by her weeping fatherless children, amidst the huzzas of "Victory! Wellington for ever! Down with the Tyrant!" &c. &c.

When I took up my pen it was with

the intention of informing you of my arrival, and not that of writing you a long letter; but the chaise not coming so soon as I expected, I have inadvertently suffered my pen to fall into the subject that I had so recently witnessed. I shall send this by an orderly going to Brighton. Your letter is this moment given me; but I have not time to read the contents, as the chaise is at the door that is to take me and an officer to London with dispatches from Lord Wellington. You may expect to hear from me again soon; perhaps see me.

C. B.

LETTER IX.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Melmoth House, August 20, 1813.

My dear Friend,

HAVING delivered up my papers, and received my dismission,

with the approbation of my employers, I am now at liberty to pursue that line of conduct you recommend in your last friendly letter. I was detained in town some days longer than I expected.

After securing my old lodging in Grosvenor Street, and calling on the Howards, who, as the servant informed me, are at Southampton, I proceeded to Berkshire, and arrived here last evening; I intend calling at Sir James Mitford's this morning, and will leave my letter unclosed 'till I return.

"Why not go to Dr. Syms's first?" you ask.—For this reason; I wish to learn what Miss Melville's situation is with respect to Lord Darnly. If your conjecture is correct, and his addresses approved of by her, I certainly shall not expose myself to a refusal. But if I find by Lady Mitford his lordship is not a successful lover, I shall then pursue my former plan of offering my hand to Emily.

Your arguments, my good friend,

may have weakened, but not removed the impression, which has so long tortured me. The scattered fragments, strewed about the room I am now writing in, brings too strongly to my recollection the agony of that moment to allow me to say I have not a doubt remaining. But, with the principle I avowed when in Portugal, will I now leave you to learn my fate.

Returned from Sir James Mitford's, with the conviction that I am not worthy of a place in the affections of the most exalted of women. I abhor myself for having for one moment entertained a doubt of her innocence. Would you believe it possible that Lady Mitford, as well as Emily, have been induced to consider the child, that has been the source of so much misery, as owing its existence to me; and that I planned, and contrived, the means of imposing it on Emily!

This was effected by a woman, the very night I was at Dr. Syms's door; and almost at the very moment must

the woman have quitted it, leaving the infant in Miss Melville's arms. Hence all the confusion that nearly drove me to distraction.

I have been in so much haste to communicate this explanation, that I have passed over the reception Lady Mitford gave me, which was as distant, and chilling, as frost in the midst of summer: so unlike her former friendly manner of meeting me, that I felt myself an unwelcome visitor; and was more inclined to make my bow, and retire, than to enter upon the business so near my heart, which had so inauspicious a begining.

But she gave me no time for deliberation; for, ringing the bell the instant I entered the room, she desired the servant to tell nurse to bring in the child again. "What child?" passed swiftly across my thought; and before this question could be solved, the nurse returned with a lovely little girl. Lady Mitford taking it in her arms, told her she might leave it. On

from me."---"Before any explanation can take place," I cried, "I must be informed if Lord Headly or his son have alledged any thing against my honor; as that is a point which must first be ascertained." Lady Mitford most solemnly declared they had not; and then begged me quietly to attend to what she alluded to. Having sent the child out, she informed me of its being left with Miss Melville, as I before related; that by no means could they discover the parents; that on going to Melmoth House, they learnt from Mrs. Lee my having been at Reading the same night the child was deposited at Dr. Syms's; and afterwards, on inquiry, found I had been seen at the door by Miss Melville's servant. Such a combination of events proved, in the opinion of Lady Mitford and Emily, every thing against me.

If delight agitated my heart, self-reproach was so mixed with it, and my countenance furnished such a true index to the contrariety of my feelings, that

Lady Mitford expressed a friendly concern for me. I requested her patience in my turn; and we became mutually satisfied. I acknowledged my folly, and consequent wretchedness, upon the occasion: as well as the persuasion I had of Miss Melville's prior attachment to Mr. Brensly. Nor did I fail to inform her, that the purport of my visit to her ladyship was to satisfy myself if Miss Melville's sentiments of Lord Darnly were favorable to him. Lady Mitford smiled encouragement to my hopes; and good humouredly replied, "Really, Sir Charles, after what you have acknowledged, I must say you do not deserve Miss Melville; though, I allow, appearances were at that moment against her. Yet, under those circumstances of dishonor, it is a matter of astonishment to me, that with such impressions on your mind, you should think of offering your hand to the disgraced Emily."—"Oh! call her not by such an epithet, I beseech you. I am over-

whelmed with shame and contrition for suffering myself to be such a dupe. I already despise myself. Your ladyship and Miss Melville must feel the utmost contempt for my base suspicions."

I walked about the room in a state of agitation, which Lady Mitford kindly endeavoured to alleviate, though she returned to her question. I replied, "That to marry Miss Melville under the painful impressions I had imbibed I was principally impelled by those motives of gratitude, which I thought demanded such a sacrifice from me: as the desertion of Mr. Brensly, who was the alledged seducer, I attributed to her liberality in my favor. I am convinced gratitude was not the only sentiment to induce my coming into Berkshire the instant I could leave town. And now, my dear madam, I have opened my whole heart to you without disguise; such as it is, dare I hope it will be accepted?" —"That, Sir Charles, you must learn

from Miss Melville, who is now with Mrs. Syms at Tunbridge Wells."—"Tunbridge Wells!" I exclaimed, "and not at Reading? What an unlucky fellow I am!"—"Since you have had the patience to endure what you have been relating, Sir Charles, I think a few days longer may be supported."—"Not by me," I replied; "your ladyship has given me hope, and cleared my mind of every torturing fancy. I feel myself in a new world; and," rising, "I shall call on Dr. Syms, and set out immediately."

Lady Mitford laughed; and wished me success. I hastened to the good Doctor's. He was out. I left word I was going to Tunbridge Wells; if he had any commands, they must be sent within an hour.

I am now finishing my letter, which I began before I went to Mitford Hall. Adieu.

C. BELMONT.

LETTER X.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Grosvenor Street, August 21, 1813.

YOUR writing to me, my dear Yorke, is of little use, as I remain not long enough in one place to enjoy the pleasure of your letters; but it is a satisfaction to me to communicate to you all the movements, either intellectual, or corporeal, of your friend, in whose happiness I have had too many proofs of the interest you take to think you can be indifferent to any circumstance relating to him, however trifling it may appear to others.

I wrote to you last, just as I was on the wing for Tunbridge Wells, where I arrived about midnight. I made the necessary inquiries where Mrs. Syms

lived; took some refreshment; and went to bed; but was too full of anxiety to sleep.

At an early hour I rose, and took a ramble towards the abode of Mrs. Syms. Not a shutter open, or servant stirring! I returned to the inn; looked over all the newspapers, without reading a single paragraph, and ordered my breakfast, which the people were stupidly tedious in preparing. When I had finished, I waited with great impatience 'till the hour I thought I might be admitted. Disappointment had uot quite done persecuting me, as you shall hear. I was within two hundred paces of the house when I saw a chaise at the door with a female seated with the coachman, and trunks, &c. as ready for travelling; but before I could advance ten steps farther, a lady, whom by the pulsations of my heart I conceived to be Emily, stepped into the carriage, and drove off immediately. Mrs. Syms, I supposed, was already in the carriage.

I was not the only one disappointed: a sailor, whom I had observed making up to the carriage, which he reached just as the door was closed upon the travellers, was equally agitated, though in a different way. In a violent rage he threw his cap after them; and was so extremely clamorous, though not a creature was near him but myself, that I thought he must be a maniac, 'till hearing him vociferate, "Emily Melville! sister!" my curiosity was excited; and I inquired what could occasion such violence. He answered me with quickness; and uttering two or three oaths,---"Is it not enough to put a man in a passion, to have been absent from his native country near sixteen years, suffering the misery of slavery, subject to the hardship of imprisonment, from which I have but just escaped, and on my return, in search of my only sister, that she should treat me like a common beggar by throwing a d——d shilling to me, and refusing to own me? Confound her d——d

pride! but I will be up with the little skiff yet." And off he was going. I tried to detain him; and desired he would not be in such haste, as most probably he was mistaken.---" The Lady, you saw, certainly is not your sister!"---" Don't humbug me: I am not such a lubber, as not to know Emily Melville is my own sister."---" Is your name Melville?" I asked.---" To be sure it is," he impatiently replied; " and I have chased that little skiff from Reading to Brighton; and from Brighton to Tunbridge Wells; and had just come up with her, when she scudded before the wind, and was off before I could pour in a broadside. I must not lay to here. I shall lose her tack if I do." And off again he was posting. I still tried to detain him, that Emily might not be surprised on the road.---" Do you propose walking, friend?" I asked.---" Come, come!" he cried, " no palavering me over with *friend* and *good fellow*. I am a very wicked fellow; and no one's friend.

And, pray, sir, how the devil should a poor sailor travel but upon his own timbers. One of my sweeps has been lopped; and the other spliced. No matter! my under-pinnings are good yet."—" Mr. Melville, I wont offend you by calling you friend; but, if you will accept a trifle to assist you in an easier mode of travelling, you will do me a favor; and perhaps it may be in my power to render you service hereafter." He hesitated; and, looking at me attentively, said,—" Are you in earnest, sir; and no fair weather chap, hanging out false colours?" I assured him of my sincerity. And he then said, he should be obliged to me to lend him a guinea; adding, " I will certainly repay you; for I have a pretty sum to receive, if my sister does not cheat me out of my right." I engaged to see justice done him; gave him two guineas, desiring him to go to town in the afternoon coach, and get a lodging at the Bolt-in-tun, in Fleet Street; and said that he should either see or hear

from me the next day. Poor Melville was not insensible to this act of kindness: tears trembled in his eyes, as he thankfully accepted my offer to serve him. He promised to follow my directions, though he was evidently inebriated, early in the day as it then was.

This adventure caused such a delay that I despaired of overtaking Mrs. Syms, and her fair companion; and, to add to my misfortune, one of the shafts broke in going through Sevenoaks, where I was obliged to alight. No chaise to be had, your honor, for love or money! all out! a fine run to-day! very busy! expect one home in an hour." I was vexed; but it was useless to complain where there was no remedy; and, being so near Sunny Vale, I preferred waiting there: I therefore took my servant's horse, desiring him to follow in the chaise the moment one might return.

The weather was beautiful; and I entered my paternal mansion with

those pleasurable sensations, that ever accompany me to Sunny Vale. Nor were they less powerfully excited, on my crossing the lobby to enter the drawing room, when,—"Sir Charles Belmont!" was pronounced in a tone of surprise by a soft tremulous voice, that would have riveted me to the spot, had not the dear angel, from whom it proceeded, been nearly fainting. "Miss Melville! Emily!" I exclaimed; seating her in a chair by the window; "by what fortunate chance do I meet you at Sunny Vale? This happiness is so unexpected!"

She was very much agitated; but the paleness of her countenance being succeeded by a beautiful suffusion, I no longer was alarmed for her health; and recovering a little from her surprise,—"I ought, Sir Charles, to apologize for this intrusion; but I was ignorant of your being in England." She rose to leave the room. I caught her hand;—"Oh, Emily! you must not leave me in this cruel suspense.

This dear hand I will not relinquish 'till I hear my doom pronounced by those lovely lips." She trembled excessively; and, with her accustomed dignity, said, "What can Sir Charles Belmont expect, from the woman he has so grossly insulted?"—"Insulted!" I cried, "by heaven! you injure me if you suppose me capable of so base an act as that you allude to. I have been to Reading; seen Lady Mitford; and every circumstance reflecting upon my honor has been fully explained; and, in her opinion, I am exculpated from blame."—"Indeed!" she exclaimed; delight animating her lovely countenance. "Yes, believe me;" I replied; "and here are my credentials signed by your friend;" at the same time presenting her a few hasty lines written by that lady. And, "Oh, Emily! that I could flatter myself that you will condescend to accept the offer of a heart, that beats only for the owner of this dear hand. Tell me, dearest Emily! bless me by

one approving smile! may I hope you will not reject my suit?"—"Spare me, I beseech you, Sir Charles;—this surprise,—this unexpected avowal has quite overcome me." And gently withdrawing her hand, she covered her face with her handkerchief. She kept me not long in suspense; for, holding out her hand to me, on my knee I received the precious boon; and, pressing it to my lips, thanked the dear angel with those expressions of affection, that Emily acknowledged to be mutual.

Lovers are said to be never satisfied. I was not one to falsify the proverb, as I would not permit Emily to leave Sunny Vale until I had made her promise to be mine.

Blest with the society of the woman I have loved from the first moment I saw her, I could not but enjoy the pleasure, with which she viewed the house, garden, and every object I thought worthy her observation; though she frequently reminded me

that Mrs. Syms would be uneasy from her long absence. "Mrs. Syms?" I cried, "where is she?"—"Waiting for me on the top of Marans-court Hill. Curiosity induced me to request Mrs. Syms to allow her servant to come with me to Sunny Vale; but I am afraid her patience will be exhausted."—"And, do you, Miss Melville, regret she acquiesced in your request?"—"Oh, Sir Charles, you have too much penetration, to credit me, even if I said I did."

As we walked on to join Mrs. Syms, I explained that the cause of my being at Sunny Vale was the accident I met with in my haste to overtake their carriage: but little did I expect the mortifying delay would be succeeded by the extatic pleasure of meeting her there. Mrs. Syms expressed much surprise to see me with Miss Melville. When informed of the cause, and that it might be sometime before I could be accommodated with another chaise, she very

civilly offered me a place in hers. A smile from Emily informed me it was an arrangement agreeable to her; and I eagerly embraced the proffered kindness. We travelled slowly, that I might point out the beauties of a situation so highly valued by me; and now become more interesting, as the epoch of my happiness began at the place of my nativity, and where my great ancestor Robert de Belmont first fixed his residence on English ground.

This little jaunt from Marams-court Hill to London was the happiest few miles I ever travelled; and no wonder it was so: seated by the object of my adoration, assured too of a reciprocal affection, my spirits were so exhilarated I scarcely ceased speaking to my companions 'till we arrived at Osborn's hotel, where they expected to meet Dr. Syms. Nor were they disappointed, as the good man was already there to receive them.

I declined dining with them; but

promised to return to go with Emily and the Doctor to the play,—a plan arranged before my arrival.

When I began this letter I had a presentiment that it would be long; therefore, as I set out with assuring to myself the interest you take in my happiness, I do not expect you will have the temerity to contradict my assertions. Mrs, Syms and Emily remain in town some days; Dr. Syms being obliged to attend a consultation.

I am at my lodgings in Grosvenor Street, writing to you that I may not meet with any one to interfere with my engagement for the evening.

LETTER XI.

MISS MELVILLE TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

London, August 22, 1813.

IT is so new a subject to me to write of an approved lover, my

dear Maria will conclude that in a fit of despair I have accepted the first man, who had compassion on me.

I have been taken by surprise, I assure you; and given my consent to marry a man, whom you have most unmercifully abused. Do you not guess to whom I allude? No other than that redoubtable knight, Sir Charles Belmont, has made me promise to be his. Do you suppose, Maria, I gave it with reluctance? No, no! with infinite pleasure did I promise my hand to the only man my foolish heart ever acknowledged as its master.

If I inform you how this eclaircissement was effected,—all scheme,—plot,—and contrivances; you will cry. Well, be it known to you, my dearest friend, that, in going to town from Tunbridge Wells, I wandered from Mrs. Syms's wing, who quietly continued in the carriage on Maramscourt Hill, while I took a ramble to gratify my curiosity by viewing the

beautiful villa of Sir Charles Belmont in Sunny Vale. That it was the place of his nativity too made it not less interesting to your Emily. I assure you I had not the most distant idea that Sir Charles was in England; much less could I expect to see one, I imagined so far off, passing me in the gallery adjoining the drawing room. Yet so it proved; and being agitated, and almost deprived of my senses, by being thus surprised, it so happened that an elaborate oration on love escaped from the master of Sunny Vale.

And surely an interloper, like myself, could not but acquiesce in an argument so ably discussed: nor could I be such an ingrate as to tell him his love and rhetoric were lost upon me. Like a damsel therefore of former times to a courteous knight, I candidly owned his avowal of attachment was gratifying to me, as he had long been master of my affections. But this acknowledgement was not

made 'till after Sir Charles had informed me he had explained his conduct so much to the satisfaction of Lady Mitford, that every circumstance to his disadvantage was obliterated. This intelligence afforded me a gratification I attempted not to conceal. Delighted, and happy, we were scarcely sensible of the flight of time; or that Mrs. Syms was waiting for me on the hill.

Sir Charles attended with me; but protracted our walk so much, that Mrs. Syms began to be alarmed, and had ordered Richard to turn the carriage towards Sunny Vale, when he said I was in sight. On Mrs. Syms seeing, by whom I was accompanied, she looked half suspicious; and, as she has told me since, at first, thought it was not altogether accidental; but Sir Charles explaining, and accepting a place in the carriage with us, and ordering his horses to be sent after him, that they might be added to ours, convinced her it was not a premeditated meeting on either side.

I never knew Sir Charles so loquacious. Mrs Syms is naturally inclined to taciturnity. My thoughts had experienced so sudden a revolution, that I was not disposed to give expression to my feelings. And the conversation of Sir Charles was too agreeable for me to wish for any other. We arrived in town later than we intended; but quite in time for Dr. Syms, who had not been released from his attendance on a patient, with whom he came to town, more than twenty minutes.

The two gentlemen went with me to the Hay-market. Mrs. Syms preferred enjoying the society of an old friend. I could have almost persuaded myself not only the house, but the performers were improved since I saw them last, did I not suspect the happy temperature of my own mind had its influence on every object I contemplated. This evening we are to be at Vauxhall.

Mrs. Howard is out of town; which

I am rather rejoiced at, as there is no chance of my meeting her. Adieu, my dear Maria. Love to Mr. Ashbourne, to whom I hope ere long to introduce Sir Charles Belmont under those circumstances, which I am certain will ensure his friendship, as well as add to the affection of---Emily Melville.

LETTER XII.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Grosvenor Street, August 22, 1813.

I WENT, last night to the theatre, as I informed you was my intention. In the company of my dear Emily I doubt if any spectacle, as an amusement, would have engaged my attention sufficiently to pronounce on its demerits, or deserts, with any degree of precision.

I have been, this morning, to enquire

after Emily's brother. No intelligence can I gain of him. I suppose, losing the direction I gave him, he has forgotten where I appointed to meet him. However, I have left a card; and desired to be sent for if he should make his appearance.

I am sent for. Melville is at the inn.

I was indeed called away to the most shocking sight I ever beheld. This unfortunate man was picked up, in some bye street, almost killed in a drunken fray. The direction I had given him being found in his pocket, the people took him to that inn. When I arrived he could scarcely speak; nor had been able to articulate more than his name, which being the same I had so lately inquired for, I was presently informed of his being there.

Immediately I dispatched a messenger for Dr. Syms, who fortunately was not gone out, and returned with the porter. The good man was ex-

tremely shocked; and, when I asked him what could be done, he shook his head and replied, "Very little, I fear. He is now under the effects of intoxication. When that is gone off, we shall be better able to judge what injury he may have sustained."

We looked over the different apartments, and found one we approved of; but the people did not very much relish the placing a poor sailor in one of their best rooms. That objection I did not find it very difficult to remove.

Melville was undressed. A more miserable object never surely presented itself. In addition to the loss of one arm, and deformity of the other, several scars, as from old wounds, were proofs undeniable of his former suffering. And his body, covered with dreadful bruises, gave ample testimony of the severity of the contest he must have recently been engaged in. His face had wonderfully escaped, which I suppose was in consequence

of his height, being six feet two inches. Dr. Syms, as well as myself, were amazingly struck by his likeness to his sister, being very handsome, notwithstanding the hardships and abandoned life he acknowledges that he has led.

Soon after he was in bed he fell asleep; and having, with the assistance of the landlady, procured a nurse and every thing necessary for a sick room, we left him. I promised to call again in a few hours.

I am engaged to go this evening to Vauxhall with Emily and Dr. Syms; but I must contrive to put this plan aside, as I know she would be very much hurt if it should ever come to her knowledge that she had been at a place of public amusement at the very time her brother was thought to be dying. I am in a dilemma, not knowing how to act. To distress my beloved Emily, by acquainting her with the discovery of her brother, and the situation he is in, I hardly think to be indispensably requisite. Better

that she should be ignorant of his existence, than learn it under circumstances so painful. Should he recover, it will then be incumbent on me to inform her, and provide for him. I am going to dine with the Syms's.

Adieu.

LETTER XIII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

August 23, 1813.

WITH Dr. Syms I went to see poor Melville in the evening. He was then quite sensible; but the nurse said, "when he first awoke he raved dreadfully;" (to use her own expression) frequently calling for his sister, who, he said, would not own him.

I went to the bed-side; and asking him how he was, he replied, "Dying! dying, unknown! unpitied!"—"Do

not say so, Mr. Melville," I cried; "I pity you; and you may depend upon my assurance that every possible care shall be taken of you; and, if your life is spared, you shall be liberally provided for."---" I thank you, sir; my glass is almost run; and, if you knew the unworthy object of your humanity, you would recal your promises of assistance, and leave me to perish, as I deserve. One request only have I to make. I think, sir, you know my sister. If you do, and can prevail on her to come, and see me before I strike my colours, I should go off the stocks easier.---I think so;" he added after a short pause. I promised to bring his sister in the morning. " Ah! but shall I live 'till the morning." Dr. Syms begged him to try and compose himself. " Alas, sir, if by your skill you can prevent the ship being agitated in a storm, then can you quiet this poor throbbing head of mine, and quell the turbulency of thought that tells

me what I am, and what I might have been." Our good friend still endeavoured to sooth him, as rest, he said, was the only restorative he could at present recommend; and for that purpose had brought a draught, which he hoped would have the desired effect. When he had taken it, we left him. Dr. Syms gives no hopes of his recovery.

I took a police officer with me to inquire into the fray, that had reduced Melville to so dangerous a situation; but found he was the aggressor, and repeatedly provoked the severity he met with. The man, against whom the heaviest part of the charge is made, expressed great concern upon the occasion; though he declares, had it been the first nobleman in England, he should have been compelled to have used the same violence. The neighbours too spoke to the provocation; and said Melville's bruises must have been in consequence of his frequently falling, sometimes on

the steps of the door; and, at others, on an iron scraper. The man however is in custody 'till Melville's fate is known.

Dr. Syms has undertaken the painful task of acquainting Emily with the discovery and situation of her brother; and early in the morning I am to call on them. I am writing in a room next to Melville, that I may be near him, should any sudden alteration take place either in his favor or otherwise. I very much dread the effect of this interview. Though I know my dear Emily has great strength of mind, yet this is so unexpected a trial as cannot but alarm me for her. She was too young, when her brother went out, to have any recollection of his person; or he of hers. I am just returned from the poor invalid, who, I think, cannot live many hours. I am going for Dr. Syms and Emily, though it is not more than seven o'clock.

Alas! poor Melville has breathed

his last; and my dear Emily saw her brother before his decease. Having previously ordered breakfast, I went for Dr. Syms and Emily, but we were little disposed to take any.

To Emily's inquiries after her brother I could make no reply, but by tenderly pressing her hand to my heart. I had informed Dr. Syms of my having seen Melville, and thought him much worse than in the evening. His senses were wandering, though his theme was still the same;—"Let me see my sister. I wish I could see Emily before I die."

This was repeated when I went into his room on my return. I told him he would soon be gratified, as his sister was in the house, and only waited my conducting her to him. He started up in his bed; but fell again on his pillow; nature being too much exhausted to bear such an exertion; but with uplifted hand and eyes he ejaculated something I could not hear. I went for Emily; her agi-

tation was so extreme I feared she would have fainted before we could reach the sick room. I endeavoured to fortify her by the tenderest expressions of affectionate sympathy in her present sufferings; and, also, to prepare her for the melancholy spectacle she was to expect, which would severely wound her sensibility. I said I wished to have spared her so afflictive a scene as must soon follow.—"Oh, no! Sir Charles," she cried; "not for the universe would I shrink from seeing my brother under any circumstances!"

I led her trembling to the side of the bed; and gently drawing back the curtain and taking his hand, I said—"Mr. Melville, your sister is here." The window curtain had been drawn up by his order; and the light fell full upon Emily. He looked earnestly at her, and exclaimed—"My sister! no! it is my angel mother come to visit her dying son. Blessed, blessed spirit! take me with you! Oh! do

not turn away from your penitent William! Oh! take me with you, my dear, dear mother! reprobate as I am, I loved my parents. My sister too, she promised to come to see me." There he fetched a deep sigh; and closed his eyes, large drops standing on his forehead.

This was too much for my beloved Emily; and she sunk almost fainting on my shoulder. I pressed her to my heart; and a shower of tears came to her relief; nor am I ashamed to acknowledge that mine were mingled with those of the afflicted sister. I soothed, and supported the dear sorrowing angel, while the good Doctor was attending his patient, who dozed a few minutes; when his senses returned, and addressing himself to me, he said, "Sir, you told me my sister was here. Is that Emily?" Emily advanced; and, taking his clammy hand, replied, "Yes, William, my dear, my only brother, I am your afflicted sister." "Oh! it is indeed

your very self. How like my mother! I thought she was here just now. I am going, Emily; my hull is beaten in. I am quite a wreck. Death has laid his heavy hand upon me. But tell me (don't weep, Emily), tell me; did my father forgive his reprobate son?"—"Did he, William! oh! it was not for so good a man, as our father was, to bear enmity to any one: much less to his child: and his last words were,—Pardon, and bless my poor erring William!" An unusual brightness illumined his eyes; and communicated a placidity to his countenance; and he suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! bless you, sweet angel of peace. May his prayers be heard! and—I—accepted!" He died immediately, without a groan, or a sigh. Emily fainted. I carried her into the next room. It was some time before she recovered. When she did, I prevailed on her to permit me to conduct her to Mrs. Syms, promising to see the last sad offices

respecting her brother's interment, &c. performed agreeably to her wishes; and I have persuaded her and Mrs. Syms to leave town to-morrow.

I think a more affecting interview and termination could not happen. My dear Emily more deeply laments the errors of her brother's life, than his premature death. Alas! dear mourner! she knows but little of his former habits or cause of his decease.

This melancholy event will delay our nuptials to a more distant period than I had proposed. These are the vicissitudes of life, painful to be borne, but to which we are all liable.

LETTER XIV.

MISS MELVILLE TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Mitford Hall, Sept. 6, 1813.

EVERY line of my last letter to you, my dear Maria, flowed from a pen guided by the hand of your then happy Emily. Alas! since that day, what a trial have I had to sustain!

My brother, yes, my dear friend, that brother, whom you have often heard me mention, Sir Charles met with, and had, with his usual humanity and consideration, appointed and provided a place to meet him, in order to arrange some establishment and provision for him. His kind intentions were defeated by some accident, unexplained to me, but which occasioned the death of my poor unfor-

tunate brother. I saw him about half an hour before his decease.

I am on every account a sincere mourner for him. And, whatever his life may have been, I endeavour to console myself that his contrition was the true contrition of a repenting mind. I am at present with dear Lady Mitford. She tells me she wrote to you the particulars of her conversation with Sir Charles, before he came to Tunbridge Wells. How very extraordinary it was that he should happen to come to Dr. Syms's the very night poor little Emily was brought there. However he is entirely exculpated from any concern in that affair; and the dear child has no other interest in Sir Charles Belmont, than what her unprotected innocence may claim from his philanthropy. The discovery of her parents is as distant as ever. She grows; and is indeed a lovely child. Pray tell your dear father I shall hope for his blessing

and approbation: remember me also to Mr. Brensly.

Your's,

E. MELVILLE.

LETTER XV.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Melmoth House, Sept. 10, 1813.

AS soon as the interment of my dear Emily's brother was over I left town for Melmoth House. The nurse, who had attended poor Melville, brought me a paper she had found sewed up in the lining of his jacket. This proves to be a short account of his life, which has been most miserable. It appears by his journal that, on his deserting the Arethusa, he entered on board the Sovereign, one of the squadron under Sir Sidney Smith; and was at the defence of Acre, where he recived three

severe wounds. On his recovery he deserted with an intention of making his way through Palestine; and, with the alms he procured from strangers, he actually travelled over a great part of that interesting division of Asia. Here he was disappointed of the expected resources; and had nearly perished with hunger: but, as he had penetrated too far to recede, he still continued a wanderer; and being ill on the road to Damascus he was taken up by some merchants, and carried by them to Bagdad. As his illness had been occasioned by want of food, he was sufficiently recovered before they reached that place to induce them to turn their humanity to some advantage to themselves; and for that purpose they sold him in the market place to strangers, with whom he continued for seven years, suffering all the hardships of slavery. To a spirit that could not submit to any laws of restraint this must have been truly miserable; and

as he describes the state of his mind during that period, one cannot accompany him in his melancholy tale without commisseration for the effects of his errors; his conscience reproaching him for his ingratitude to the best of parents, while he was labouring in the garden of a master, who cruelly kept back part of his allowance of food whenever exhausted nature refused to execute the task allotted him. These self reproaches, and the planning his escape, occupied his mind for several years before an opportunity offered for putting it in execution. One morning he was ordered to go with a caravan to Aleppo. And having still preserved the dress of an English sailor, he contrived to secret it among the provender of the camels, of which he had the care.

The fatigue and hardship of his journey he bore with fortitude, as he had the exhilarating hope of once more being free. They arrived at Aleppo in the evening; and as soon as

he had fed his cattle he changed his dress, and walked off to a distant part of the city, where he had observed a church, which he concluded was dedicated to christianity. Here he waited for some time, and began to despair of succeeding in his plan of escape, when he heard the church door open, and a funeral approach. He joined the mourners, and had an opportunity of rendering himself useful. The corpse being heavy, one of the carriers sunk beneath his burthen, which Melville observing took his place. An elderly gentleman, who attended and was himself an Englishman, was going to reward Melville for his civility; but on seeing his dress, desired him to come with the attendants to his house. This was joyfully accepted by our traveller, and gave him an opportunity of telling his distressing situation to one likely to assist him. There he was concealed 'till the merchant could conveniently send to Smyrna. Melville says the

few weeks he passed in the house of this good man were more satisfactory than any part of his life; and to those he could look back without pain, though unhappily he relapsed into his former vices as soon as he again was exposed to temptation.

The merchant ship, that Melville was in, was scarcely out in the Mediterranean sea when they were taken by a French frigate, and retaken the next day by the Arethusa. Melville, as he says, expected to be recognized and severely punished for his former desertion from that ship. He found he was known, though so many years had elapsed since; and therefore went to the captain, who was not the same that commanded when he deserted. To him he confessed his misconduct, and related the hardships he had endured; these pleaded so much in his favor, the wounds particularly which he received at the siege of Acre, that the captain considered his sufferings as already adequate to

to his crime, and remitted the punishment to which he was liable.

On their return to England he was passed into another ship; and was one of the crew of a boat sent in to reconnoitre the harbour of Brest: a ball shattered his arm, and amputation became necessary. In his fall he had fractured the other. The whole crew being made prisoners, there he remained 'till April last, when he made his escape with three of his domrades. Poor fellow! most of his painful account appears to have been lately written.

From Melmoth House I shall not go 'till I can take my charming bride with me: and I indulge a hope the dear girl will consent to bless me with her hand in a month or six weeks as I have so good an advocate in Lady Mitford, and one still better in the heart of my Emily herself, who, I am sure, will not pain me by unnecessary delays.

Melmoth Park and its environs

have a thousand beauties unobserved by me before; and, in compliance with Emily's wishes, we shall spend a fortnight here before we go to Sunny Vale, Being then in the adjoining county we shall proceed to the Castle of Pevensey before winter and bad roads may render travelling unpleasant. Emily entirely approves of my parting with that property, and adding to Sunny Vale, which she is delighted with; and she wishes that I would make it our principle summer residence. This so well accords with the domestic plan I had formed for my future life, that it affords me infinite satisfaction as well as an indisputable proof of our coincidence in notions of comfort.

I hope when I write again it will be to announce our marriage. I feel secure in your good wishes; and I shall be happy to congratulate you upon the same occasion.

You are more obliged to me for this long letter than for any one I ever

penned in my life. Though every hour is not spent with my beloved Emily, yet my thoughts cannot be easily abstracted from an object so dear to your affectionate friend,

C. BELMONT.

LETTER XVI.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO MISS MELVILLE.

Bath, August 30, 1816.

HARRIET has informed you, my dear Emily, of my having sprained my wrist; and I am now giving you evidence of its being quite well. They would not allow me to write because I made wry faces when I used my hand; though I longed to tell you how diverted I was with your being Q in a corner at Sunny Vale. Oh! what would I have given to have been an invisible spy at that eventful period! Had I known so

much knight-errantry had been going on in the land I would have mounted my palfrey, and with the knight of the sorrowful countenance, as poor Howard is, I would have flown, if my palfrey could fly, to thy assistance.

Another scene too I should have very much enjoyed; that of Lady Mitford, with all the gravity suitable to her age and the occasion, presenting little Emily to Sir Charles, as his daughter. This was surely enough to provoke any one less than a saint. It seems Sir Charles does not chuse to own the brat. He was a shabby fellow to run away from Dr. Syms's on hearing the child cry. By instinct I dare say she knew he was near, and was only calling out *papa*.

Your last letter, my dear Emily, followed quick upon the first from town. I was truly grieved your happiness should have been so transitory; but I hope you will soon recover the shock of so melancholy an event; and though your union with the man of

your affections may be protracted for a short time, yet your prospects of happiness, my dear father says, are as promising as you must expect in this sublunary world.

Lady Harriet is making hasty strides to be in love; that too with one, who is as insensible to her charms as the mandarin on my chimney piece is to my dear self at this present time. I am sometimes quite provoked with him; Howard I mean. It is time now for the man to look about him: had the creature been a woman, I should have expected her lamentations and grievings that she should be so unfortunate as to belong to a country where widows are not permitted to share and grace the funeral pile of their departed spouses. Men never were covetous of such indulgencies; and therefore he has no business to mope about, as if the woman he has lost were the only good woman ever created. I don't think I am unfeeling, but there is a time for all things,

I am rather angry. I was even vexed, since I begun this letter. Brensly, Harriet, two young friends, and myself were reading a humourous publication, alternately. This occasioned much laughing. In the height of which Cleveland opened the door; and solemnly advanced a few steps into the room; and, like Sir Walter Raleigh in the Critic, as solemnly marched out again without speaking a syllable to any one. Brensly followed his friend. The two girls ran home. Harriet was mortified; and here am I explaining the cause of my phillippic against outrageously mourning widowers. Here is my husband at my elbow, telling me he is sure his friend *likes* Harriet. "Likes!—what a pretty expression, when applied to a lovely young woman! Man!" I exclaimed, "do you take me for a tailor; and Howard chusing pattern for his coat?"—"Did not you observe, my love," said the coaxing wretch, "how attentive Howard was yester-

day to Harriet; offering her his arm?" ---" A mighty humiliation to be sure," I cried; " and did your worship hear what produced such a condescension in your friend?"---" No, Maria; what was it?"---" Only this; that, as we were crossing the street, a carriage coming near Harriet, a country fellow called out to Cleveland,---" Why, sur, you will let that pretty girl be run over, if you don't look a little sharper about you."---Howard did then offer her his arm, as I dare say my father would his stick to any old woman in Bath." Dinner is announced.

Adieu.

M. BRENSLY.

LETTER XVII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

EMILY, my dearest Emily, if my last letter is in existence destroy

it instantly, I beseech you; and obliterate from your memory that any one, you honor with your friendship, could treat with levity the tender grief of an affectionate husband for the loss of an amiable wife. My letter yesterday was scarcely out of the house before I was made to feel the agonizing pang of dreaded separation from my beloved Brensly, whose life was endangered at dinner by a fish-bone in his throat; and, but for the prompt exertions of the very man I had but a few minutes before turned into ridicule, Brensly would in all probability have been at this time a lifeless corpse. I was myself too much overcome by fright to render any assistance. Never can I forget the tender solicitude of the amiable Howard towards his friend; or the kind attention he bestowed upon one so undeserving as myself. My conscience smote me with remorse, as with the affection of a brother he assured me the cause of alarm was removed; and no danger

to be apprehended but to myself. Brensly, dear fellow, soon was capering from father to daughter. I believe the good man was in no hurry to leave us. Harriet, between admiration of the handsome widower, and alarm for her brother, is, through smiles and tears, very expressive I assure you.

I suppose you are busily employed in looking over the habiliments for the bridal day, which I am in hourly expectation of hearing have been put to use. I am indeed most anxious, my dear Emily, your happiness should be placed beyond the reach of human power, I was going to say; but I mean dæmoniac arts to frustrate. Adieu, dear Emily; may all the loves and graces dance at your wedding, nor leave you 'till your Belmont can prefer the wrinkles of the aged Emily to the dimples of youth. Roses and lillies can be purchased; so don't forget a little may be requisite to keep the old gentleman in good humour.

LETTER XVIII.

LADY MITFORD TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Melmoth House, Sept. 25, 1813.

FEW incidents in life, my dear Mrs. Brensly, could afford me equal satisfaction to that of our dear Emily being united to so worthy a man as Sir Charles Belmont, which, since all our doubts are removed as to one particular point, we can no longer refuse in justice to his superior worth; of which on so many occasions, both in public and private life, he has given abundant proofs.

I have the pleasure of congratulating both you and Mr. Ashbourne on the marriage of Miss Melville to Sir Charles Belmont, which was celebrated yesterday in a style of benevolence rather than ostentatious shew. All

the pensioners, who were able to bear the little jaunt to Melmoth House, dined here at an early hour; our carriages bringing and taking them back before dark; each having a small basket of such little comforts as their allowance does not extend to, except in illness.

To day several poor families are to be regaled with the good cheer of this house; and to-morrow the same will be repeated. To each family a distribution of winter clothing will be given; and a remuneration for the time they may have lost upon this occasion. Emily and Sir Charles are both engaged in superintending, and assisting, that their plans may not be defeated by negligence, which too frequently happens when we consign to others the execution of our charitable purposes. The group of happy countenances, I am well convinced, conveyed more pleasure to this worthy pair, than any display of grandeur which is calculated either to surprise,

or create a murmur or sigh of discontent, by a comparison of their own lot with that of their entertainer. No! they saw nothing to wish for, but what they enjoyed; and all being enriched returned satisfied to their humble dwellings.

The death of Emily's brother occasioned some little delay; but as we have every reason to suspect that some malignant wretch bears this amiable couple enmity, I have been the more urgent that they might not be again separated. Sir James gave his dear girl away to the only man he says worthy such a treasure.

Had Emily refused to accept Sir Charles I really believe he never would have appropriated any part of Mrs. Melmoth's property to his own use, the rents of which, Sir James tells me, have continued in the steward's possession, except the sums drawn for repairs, pensioners, &c.

The union of this amiable couple will be productive of much good to

many suffering individuals. With such resources for ameliorating the distress of their fellow creatures, and the disposition to render others happy, there can be little doubt of their enjoying that blessing themselves. I am now writing in Emily's favorite dressing room at Melmoth House. All here unite in kind regards.

Your's,

ISABELLA MITFORD.

LETTER XIX.

LADY BELMONT TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Melmoth House, Sept. 30, 1813.

YOU have been informed, my dear Maria, by Lady Mitford, that your Emily is indissolubily united to her beloved Belmont. I think I have a prodigious deal of business upon my hands already; and feel as those must do, who have been long absent from

a large family. Sir Charles so fully enters into all my plans for the happiness and comfort of those dependent on us, that I shall have no difficulties to encounter, but have every assistance and support for the promotion of their general good. The poor grateful pensioners seem to participate in my happiness by their pleased countenances, and innocent congratulations.

After a few weeks we did propose going to Sunny Vale, and remaining there 'till near christmas, and not visiting Sussex 'till the spring. We have now altered our plan, in consequence of a letter from Pevensey with the usual petition for Sir Charles's presence, which is more strongly urged than ever. Therefore we shall go to town; order some articles of furniture for Sunny Vale; go down there to give a few directions to be executed immediately; then pursue our rout to Pevensey. It is not improbable that we may go to Brighton, if the weather continues fine. Colonel

Yorke is the most intimate and confidential friend Sir Charles has. How sly he was! He knew every transaction at Melmoth House; and also of little Emily's being my protegè. I often thought there was an air of mystery about him, particularly when one evening I called him Sir Charles. With a penetrating eye he watched me as if to discover what was attached to that appellation, which could occasion the mistake I had made, and the confusion that followed.

Pevensey, I understand, is a dreary place, though so near the sea. We shall continue there only two or three days. Mr. Jackson has written a most pressing invitation; and so earnestly requests Sir Charles and myself to take up our abode at the castle, that, notwithstanding the tenant's representations of his extraordinary conduct, Sir Charles says he cannot resolve to mortify the poor man by making any other place his residence; especially, as Mr. Jackson informs him,

the accommodations in the village are so very indifferent. After all complaints are adjusted, we shall go to Sunny Vale, there to remain 'till near christmas, which we propose spending at Melmoth House; and where I earnestly hope, my dear Maria, her good father, Mr. Brensly, and any friends she may have with her, will consent to join us. Sir Charles is, I assure you, very warm in seconding this proposal. And you will recollect it is the first favor asked of you by

EMILY BELMONT.

LETTER XX.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Melmoth House, Sept. 30, 1813.

DON'T reproach me, dear Henry, that I have not informed you of my marriage before the papers announced it to the public. My friends

must pardon my apparent negligence, for indeed I cannot employ myself independent of my dear Emily's society; and as I am in the habit of writing long letters to you, notes and scraps will not satisfy my friend, I am sure. Emily is at this time writing to Mrs. Brensly, whom she loves as a sister. Of Mr. Brensly I am convinced I never had cause of jealousy, but what arose from Mrs. Howard's insinuations, and the corroborating circumstance of letters being directed to Lord Glenmore, which I thought were intended for his son; though I now find they were so enclosed at the request of Miss Ashbourne, now Mrs. Brensly. I hope I have no jealousy in my constitution. I think I have not. Yet an incident occurred this morning that made me doubt myself. My dear Emily proposed bringing her little protegè to Melmoth House. I hesitated in my answer, as if not approving of this addition to the family, and said, "Why remove the child

from the place where she is?" She was struck by my manner, which I was not conscious of myself, 'till I saw by Emily's countenance she was hurt, though she mildly answered, "I think the child would do better here; she wants a more active attendant than she has at present. Her nurse has a child nearly of little Emily's age, which occupies too much of her time. But what made you hesitate, my dear Belmont?"—"I did not know, my love, that I did so."—"Surely you can have no"— The dear angel did not finish her sentence. I would not suffer her to utter another word; but immediately ordering the carriage, and assisting to prepare for her little charge, went with her to bring the child to Melmoth House. After an explanation so perfectly satisfactory it is impossible to have a suspicion of any impropriety of conduct in her, whom I have the happiness to call my wife.

Melmoth House we propose filling

with friends at christmas; and hope you will be able to get leave of absence to make one of our party. The Montagues are expected at Mitford Hall. Emily says Eliza Montague is a magnet you will be attracted by. I assure you Lady Belmont will rejoice to see the friend of her husband; though she thinks it was a sly trick, of which she shall demand an explanation. Pray read the enclosed from Mr. Howard. I am truly sorry, though I must blame him; and great cause, as he observes, has he to condemn himself.

LETTER XXI.

HARFORD HOWARD, ESQ. TO SIR CHARLES BELMONT.

Southampton, Sept. 27, 1813.

My dear Brother,

UNACQUAINTED as I am with Lady Belmont, yet I beg you will

accept my sincere congratulations upon an event that I hope will be conducive to the happiness of both.

The very morning that brought us this agreeable intelligence, and by the same post, did we receive a few lines from Horace to inform us of his marriage also; but when, or where, he leaves us in ignorance: nor does he say to whom he is married, except that she is the daughter of a Mr. O'Kelly at Richmond.

We had been under considerable anxiety about him for several weeks, not knowing where he was gone; but as he had taken money with him, I concluded we should hear from him when that was expended. Indeed he has been a great trouble to me these last two years; and we have every reason to apprehend his present connexion is not such as we could wish.

Your sister is quite frantic; and no wonder she is so, as her too great indulgence has been the primary cause of his ruin. Although I make this re-

mark, I do not wish you to imagine I do so to exculpate myself from censure. Far from me is any such intention; as, I assure you, Sir Charles, I very much condemn and reproach myself with pusillanimity in yielding to Mrs. Howard, when my judgment pointed out to me the baneful consequences to our child. I have written to a friend at, Richmond to inquire who Mr. O'Kelly is, whose daughter Horace has married.

I am afraid your sister's intellects are affected, for several nights she has had no rest, and scarcely takes any nourishment. I shall, if possible, remove her to town next week. From you only, my good brother, do I expect any comfort or advice. Poor Cleveland, though considerably better than he was, is not sufficiently recovered to afford me any assistance; and Mrs. Howard this morning expressed such an aversion to see him that I dare not invite him to my house.

With best regards to Lady Belmont,
I am your affectionate brother,

HARFORD HOWARD.

LETTER XXII.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Melmoth House, Sept. 30, 1813.

ANOTHER letter from Mr. Howard. The account he gives of my sister's health is truly distressing. They will be in town early next week. I will not go either to Pevensey, or Sunny Vale, 'till I have seen my sister, though I am not very anxious to hear the effusions of her violent temper. Her disappointment in consequence of her son's making a connection so very different to what she had planned for him must be truly mortifying to her as a mother, and to a haughty spirit, like that which animates her, may produce insanity.

I have this morning received a long history from Horace of his Gretna Green expedition. It is too voluminous to transcribe; so I have procured franks to enclose it in for your perusal. I shall make no comments; but leave it to speak for itself.

Your's,

C. BELMONT.

LETTER XXIII.

Enclosed in the foregoing Letter.

HORACE HOWARD, ESQ. TO SIR CHARLES BELMONT.

Richmond, Sept. 28, 1813.

I HEAR, my dear uncle, you have entered the pale of matrimony: so have I. You are married to a pretty girl: so am I. You know to whom you are married: so do not I; nor can any but the d---l himself, (with

whom my father in law is pretty familiar,) inform you.

I am convinced I deserve a good flogging; and if you have a crab-tree on your estate it would be an act of justice to my back to give it what it has long groaned for.

You have, my dear uncle, been often annoyed by my boyish tricks, which you thought extended beyond the age such freaks might find excuse for. I confess I did not like you the better for seeing my faults; nor for blaming my mother for her too great indulgence, as you termed it.

After your leaving England I thought I was more at liberty to do as I pleased; and the frequenting houses where games of chance were permitted afforded me the greatest amusement, notwithstanding I was seldom encouraged by success. I lost considerable sums 'till I had drained every guinea my mother could command; and, on her remonstrating with more violence than I

chose to bear, I left Southampton, and returned to London, determined not to submit to the control of parents, whom I had not been accustomed to respect. I went to my father's banker, and prevailed on him to accommodate me with three hundred pounds. A new fancy now took me; and that was to go to you, and serve as a volunteer in Spain. With this intention I was going to secure a place in the Portsmouth coach, thinking I should arrive there in time to go out with the troops then about to sail with the first fair wind. My evil genius started up in the person of a young man I had lost trifling sums to. He asked me where I was bound to. I told him my intention. He laughed at me, and said I had much better go with him; he had something more agreeable in view than a broken head. He was going, he said, to Worthing, in pursuit of a devilish fine girl, and thirty thousand pounds. "But how do you know you shall have her?

Does she encourage you?"—"Encourage me? no! not quite so sure as that neither! I am known to her, that's all; and if you will assist me in my enterprise, you shall have a fourth of her fortune, be what it may. And if it shall so happen that she gives you the preference, I expect you will do the same by me; and I will give you all the assistance in my power." "Agreed," I cried, "no stage coach travelling! post chaise and four, my buck; and two out riders! We will dash into Worthing quite in style." O'Brien, for that was the name of my associate, quite approved my proposal; and we arrived at Worthing the next day. We then arranged our plan of attack. O'Brien left me for about half an hour. On his return he proposed going to the play. This I agreed to. He soon pointed out the heiress, as he called her, who, with her aunt, was sitting in the next box to ours. As there was room in their box, he asked permission to oc-

he returned; and if a journey to Scotland was not to be avoided, it was high time to arrange for it, as my second hundred was nearly exhausted. I took an opportunity of declaring my love for the beautiful Camilla the next day, and had the happiness of hearing myself acknowledged as the possessor of the heart of the African merchant's lovely daughter, though she despaired of obtaining his consent. To render his interposition useless I proposed an elopement. To this she started many objections; and begged me to give her time to consider if there were no means of gaining over her father to approve of my addresses. I had no time to lose; and pleaded my cause so successfully, that Camilla consented to elope with me the next day. Conveyance, place, and time appointed, we were on our way to Gretna Green before five o'clock the next morning. We pursued our journey to the land of matrimony without molestation;

though for the first hundred miles I every minute expected a troop of horsemen, with the enraged merchant at their head, to stop us in our progress. No pursuit was there that I ever heard of, and the happy knot being tied, we returned without any interruption to London; and took up our residence at an hotel near Westminster bridge.

The next thing to be done was to write to our papas to inform them, where we were to be found, and that a little cash would be very acceptable. I had not once inquired of Camilla about her family, or fortune, satisfied with the information O'Brien had given me; though I had explicitly informed her of mine, and what my expectations were.

Two days elapsed, and no answer was returned to either of our letters; but on the evening of the third Mr. O'Kelly was announced; and a man of a strange appearance, followed by the little yellow-faced aunt and two

ill-looking fellows, entered the room we were sitting in. Mr. O'Kelly ran up to me with clenched fists, and in a voice that made me tremble from head to foot,—"Is it you, sir," he cried, "that ran away with my daughter; and have begun asking me for money to keep you?" Without waiting for my answer he retreated a few paces; and with vulgar theatrical attitude he began speaking, as to an audience, with a twang through his nose;—"Gentlemen, and ladies, I request your attention to"— Camilla, now advancing, gently took her father's hand, and entreated him to be pacified;—she had married a gentleman, and one of good expectations from his family, who no doubt could support her.—"Arrah! my jewel, say you so! then kiss, and be friends! By St. Patrick! I thought you had married some scamp by your begging for money so soon; and, if so, not a shiner of mine should you have had to buy salt to your potatoes."

How I looked, or how I felt upon this meeting I cannot say; but Mr. O'Kelly again addressed me; "Bless my plood! son-in-law; you look half starved. Have not you cot a pit of supper for your freends? Weel gang awae to anothrer hoose if you don't fancy us." I now spoke, for the first time; and stammered out a request that I hoped he would stay supper, which should be ordered immediately. "That's right, my hearty! There is some stuff in you yet, for all you look so deadly pale and wanish. Gentlemen, and ladies, please to observe"--- Then turning suddenly to me, "Son-in-law, where are you going to live?" To this inquiry I could make no reply, as I did not know where to go; and he continued, "Arrah! my honey, but you must come to my house at Richmond 'till your quality relations please to own you. We will make room for you, though we are a little full at present. May I never pass another

card but I will make my Camilla's mate welcome."

In this mixed unaccountable jargon and jumble of dialects did my new father express himself; and it was settled that we were to go to Richmond the next day. Aunt Orange eat of all the good things at table, though she was finding fault the whole time. To all Mr. O'Kelly said his associates added applause, with the most servile humility. Mr. O'Kelly and his companions being gone, I asked Camilla what countryman her father was. She replied she could not tell; but that he had travelled, and had acquired a language of his own; and seemed pleased to puzzle people to find out where his native country might be.

The folly I had been guilty of so fully occupied my mind, that I felt no inclination to go out of the hotel 'till the chaise came to the door that was to take us to Richmond, which was soon after breakfast the next day;

and we arrived at Mr. O'Kelly's rather earlier than he expected us; which appeared to please him, though, as he said, he was not dressed for company, except his fur cap, ornamented with the tails of seven monkeys. His gown of plaid was so loaded with snuff that, instead of answering to his civility, I sneezed three or four times. He was standing at the front door of his mansion, for such it may be denominated, being very large and ancient, situated a little below the Star and Garter, with a handsome approach; and, as I found next morning, the garden and paddock extended to the edge of the Thames. The appearance of the house confirmed in my opinion the information O'Brien had given me of the wealth of Mr. O'Kelly; and I flattered myself that I should soon have solid proofs that my wife had an independent fortune, which would be forth coming if I could not get any from my own friends. I thought

it rather odd that, when we drove up to the house, Mr. O'Kelly was engaged with a man, who had a wooden leg, and was lugging out of a small hamper a lamb with two heads, a double number of legs, with the addition of an extra tail. Mr. O'Kelly eagerly inquired for the lamb's mother; "The mother is dead," replied the man with the wooden leg, "and, if she was living, she would be of no use to us, because she had not the luck to have more heads and legs than her neighbours."---"But the lamb,---how shall we contrive to keep that without the mother?"---"Zooks! zur, don't you see as how lamb is dead; and it is time she was sent to the stuffers, or the flies will carry her off?" Mr. O'Kelly now welcomed us, who had been waiting all the time of this curious dialogue for his salutation. He observed that business must be attended to.

On entering the house, my nose was assailed by a different attack

from that of snuff. An offensive smell like that at Exeter Change came across me; and it had such an effect upon my head as to compel me to retire early to bed. I could not sleep; and fancied I heard a thousand strange noises. Once I thought I heard the rumbling of a hearse. My heart beat violently. Surely, thought I, I am not to be packed of, dead or alive, like the lamb. Camilla relieved my mind from this alarm by saying it was one of her grandfather's carriages.---"Grandfather!" I repeated, "have you a grandfather living?"---"Yes," she replied, "that old gentleman, who came to the hotel, and with whom we dined to-day, is my grandfather."---"Then where is your father?" I asked.---"He has been dead many years," she said, "but I always call Mr. O'Kelly my father."

What a precious mess have I made for myself! sleep I could not; so as soon as it was light I got up to go into the air. The servants not being

up, I could not get out. I returned again to my chamber. Camilla was still asleep. I continued there 'till I heard the shutters opening below. Down I went again; and, as I passed through the hall, I could not but admire the decorations and extraordinary furniture. Several small light saddles, bridles, and a number of whips. A tambourine, French horn, with two or three other instruments of music. I opened the door; and the first object that met my eye was the carriage I had supposed to be a hearse, and which proved to be no other than a conveyance for wild beasts, &c. with Dennis O'Kelly in flaming gilt characters descriptive of the contents.

I ran down the declivity to the margin of the river, into which I had thoughts of plunging myself; but, after looking into the water some time, I changed my mind; and slowly walked up the hill I had so lately ran down.

I felt no inclination to return into the house. A violin playing a country dance induced me to follow the sound, however discordant to my present feelings; and I found it proceeded from a large room forming one wing of the house; but the windows being all blank, except one too high to allow me to gratify my curiosity, I should have quitted this scene of mirth had not a friendly ladder presented itself, and assisted me to overcome this difficulty. I had the gratification of seeing a female dwarf and a monkey receiving lessons from the family dancing master. What most particularly attracted my attention was, that, at what appeared a small printing press, a person, who I thought resembled my friend O'Brien seemed busily employed in printing hand bills. I was not long suffered to enjoy the delightful sensation arising from this discovery. The hideous noises, rattling of chains, with glaring eyes directed to the window, through

which I was looking, alarming the keeper, he took from his belt a small pistol, and pointing it to me I expected to be shot; and in my haste to retreat I missed a step; and falling from the ladder I dislocated my left shoulder. My descent was observed by some of the attendants. The fellow with the wooden leg first came up, and began to thump me about with his stump to see if I were alive. Another of the gentlemen, for they are all gentlemen of some department here, came, and I was accosted with, "Well! Mr. Merryman; that would have been a devilish good start if you had not doubled in your flight. Have you cracked any bones, my lad?"—"No! d---n you!" I replied; "I wish your head was cracked, that I might not be troubled with you."—"Oh! if you are for a little milling or so, I am your man. My teeth Big Ben knocked out; and one eye Harry Slouch purchased with the loss of both his; but I can see

well enough to jelly your ribs; for flesh you have none." The wooden legged man had a little more humanity; and helping me up, he reprimanded his companion, by saying,--- "The gem'man is but just come amongst us; and mayhap is not in a fighting cue." I was next questioned how I came up there: was it to mend the window? I made no reply, but proceeded to the house: my tormentor answered for me; "Ah! he is a liquorish dog; and had a mind to have a peep at Lady Morgan." This conclusive sentence brought us to the front door, where I was met by Camilla, Aunt Orange, and the dancer of bears, whom I have the honor to call father. A surgeon was immediately sent for; and my shoulder set right.

I must say they are all very kind to me; but I am miserable in this den. What is to be done I know not. If my father will not extricate me from my present situation I must be-

come a dancer of bears too, as there is no living here, I am told, in idleness. I have not much relish for going with the family to country fairs. I have had it explained to me in what the the merchandize of Mr. O'Kelly consists; viz. the quadrupeds from Africa; no gold, but that emblazoned on the caravans; no pearls, but in his daughter's ears; nor diamonds, except the spark, which is in his watch. I am told that large sums have been expended on the education of my wife, therefore as far as that goes my mother need not be ashamed of the African merchant's daughter; for she is highly accomplished; sings in fine style; dances a hornpipe to admiration; paints beautifully;—her own face the finest red and white I ever saw. Then she never blushes, a proof she has early been accustomed to good company.

I think my mother informed me that upon the death of Mrs. Cleveland Howard I was heir to an estate

she enjoyed for her life, Now, if it is so, I should be very glad to have it, that I may get away from this confounded stench. Do, dear uncle, be my friend this time; and I will ever be directed by you in future; and continue your dutiful nephew,

H. HOWARD.

P. S. I have not a single guinea left, even to pay for putting my shoulder in place. All went in our trip to Scotland, which by the bye there was no occasion for, my wife being two years older than myself, and I am near twenty-two. I thought, dear uncle, I would write you a history, of my misfortunes, having nothing else to do; and, if I am not soon delivered from this lion's den, I must die, as many do, in the act of seasoning.

LETTER XXIII.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Melmoth House, Oct, 1, 1813.

AFTER reading the packet I sent you of Horace Howard's letters you cannot be surprised to hear of my sister's illness, and the consequent distress of Mr. Howard. Certainly they have both been greatly to blame; yet, as parents, they are entitled to our pity. I declare I am quite at a loss what to advise; and the only plan I can think of for Horace is to get a commission for him in one of the regiments now serving abroad. If he conducts himself properly there, and his wife does the same, a few years may perhaps reconcile all parties. Mr. O'Kelly, I should suppose, must be far advanced in life, and

not likely long to proclaim his affinity to Horace's wife.

Mr. Howard's servant is now here. He brought a most distressing note from his master, earnestly requesting me to come to George Street. My sister he thinks is going very fast. at one time she is quite delirious; at another insensible to any question asked her. His affliction upon the occasion is almost insupportable. His brother Cleveland's spirits are still too much depressed to afford him any consolation; and my sister also has conceived such a dislike to him, that if she only hears he is in the house she raves about his wife in the most incoherent manner, so as very much to shock him, and those about her. Emily hopes I will comply with Mr. Howard's request, and not allow any former unkindness of my sister to her to influence me at this time, when Mrs. Howard is so great a sufferer. Under such circumstances the dear

creature adds she is entitled to every indulgence. I shall therefore go to town to-morrow.

LETTER XXIV.

COL. YORKE TO SIR CHARLES BELMONT.

Brighton, Oct. 3, 1813.

My dear Belmont,

I WILL confess I did pout a little at what I deemed a neglect; but I am not so obdurate as to resist your apology. Yet now I think of you again I am very angry; yes! in a violent passion; and declare I could almost find in my heart to measure swords with you. You acknowledge your silly hesitation pained your lovely wife; yet you will not allow yourself to be of a jealous disposition. I will not venture my precious life under the roof of Mel-

moth House. A mince-pie is a devilish good vehicle to pop a little arsenic into; and as you have so lately been taking lessons from noble dons, and lovely donnas, I fear you will be inclined to put in practice some of their cookery. Jesting apart, I hope, my dear friend, you will carefully guard against the approaches of jealous whims; or misery to yourself and your amiable Emily must inevitably be the consequence. You have no cause upon earth, I am very sure, to doubt her affection, which I am firmly persuaded you alone possess.

Your worthy nephew's adventures I have returned, as I think you may wish to lay them up with the valuable manuscript you once mentioned. I am very sorry to laugh at any circumstance that occasions pain to others, particularly to those who must keenly feel as parents for the errors of their children; but had my own brother been so gulled I could not have

resisted the first impulse of risibility.

I well remember the name of O'Kelly as proprietor of an exhibition of wild beasts. They were at Leeds about five years since; and a gaily dressed pretty girl, with a young man, shewed many feats of horsemanship to the admiring spectators. I have cause to remember this as one of my men, going too near a tiger cat, had his cap caught off by the animal, who, finding it so good a plaything, would not relinquish his prize 'till it was torn to atoms. And in the evening, the young man, who, I suppose, is O'Brien, and the same, who so egregiously duped your nephew, came; and very civilly offered to make a recompence for the mischief.

O'Kelly, I have heard, has, for these last four or five years, sent his niece, with her aunt, to some fashionable watering place, furnishing them with a carriage, servants,

and a good sum to enable them to make an appearance. O'Brien, who is son to the lady Horace calls Aunt Orange, by a former husband, attends to circulate the report of a rich heiress being there; and has introduced various young men to her acquaintance; but the prize was reserved for Horace Hopeful. I can only tell you, for your comfort, that if she can tame some of the dispositions of your family with the facility her father does his, you may set a high value on the connection.

LETTER XXV.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

George Street, Oct. 7, 1813.

I AM now, my dear friend, in the house of wretchedness; and hourly witnessing the heart rending situation of an only sister. Though

she is far from being amiable, yet nature has her claims; and I feel for her acutely. Yet I cannot think, with Mr. Howard, that she is at present insane. Her looks and pulse strongly indicate illness: nor does she fall into those unmeaning nothings, that so strongly mark derangement.

But to give you any idea of our present situation I must go back to my arrival here, the day before yesterday. Mr. Howard met me in the hall. Not able to speak, he held out his hand, and I followed him to his library. His altered countenance and his emaciated figure struck me as the consequence of his domestic misery.

When he recovered a little from the agitation occasioned by our first meeting, I inquired if my sister was dangerously ill. "I can scarcely answer your question, Sir Charles," he replied, "ill undoubtedly she is; and grieved am I to say our son's

misconduct has nearly deprived his mother of her reason. We have been in town five days, and I think her ravings are more violent than before we left the country. I have informed her of your being here, and she is expecting to see you. I seldom leave her."

I followed my good brother to my sister's dressing room. The first impression on seeing her I never shall forget. She was sitting directly in front of the fire, though the weather is still mild; her elbows upon her knees, and her hands supporting her head; her fine hair in disorder, most of it flowing on her shoulders. I was surprised, and shocked to see her in such a posture. I attempted to take her hand; this she would not suffer me to do; and before I could even inquire after her health she abruptly began, "Well, Charles; what are you come for?"—"To see you, sister; and most truly concerned am I to"— "Come, don't tell lies;"

she cried, "speak truth, and shame the devil! you know, Charles, that is a good saying. I hit you there:" nodding significantly, and laughing, "Ha, ha, ha! I hit you there."

Without altering her posture, she observed my attention was fixed on herself. "What do you look at me for?" she fiercely asked. "Are you married?" and, in milder tones, answering herself, "Yes! I heard you was married: every body marries. Your father married. I married. Cleveland Howard married." And sighing, "Poor Caroline!---she died. Horace too,---my darling son, married; and-----broke-----his-----mother's heart." This was uttered in so low a voice we were in hopes she would have wept, which she had not done since she first heard of her son's marriage. But after a short silence, she, suddenly half starting from her seat, dropped again into the same posture; and addressing herself to me, "Do you know whose daughter

Horace has married?" I assured her I did not. "I can tell you;---he is a fire-eater; a conjuror; can take your teeth out of your head, without your knowing it. Clever fellow! Clever fellow!"

We continued with her for some time; on wishing her a good night, she said, "You had better go too, Mr. Howard; and kick your gouty heels on the pavement; it will keep off chilblains." I suppose she thought I was going to Grosvenor Street. I will wait, a few days, the event of her illness, which I hope will yield to the effects of medicine; but a confirmed insanity is greatly to be dreaded from the natural violence of her temper. It requires all my fortitude to absent myself from a home rendered so dear by the possession of one, so perfect a contrast to my poor sister. Though I pity her for the cause, I cannot but feel how necessary she has herself been to the ruin of her son.

I have heard from my friend Smith to whom I sent Miss Greenfield, requesting him to place her in a convent at Vittoria. The poor girl is dead. He writes me word he gave her the brooch; and, upon receiving it, she was greatly affected; said the hair was her husband's and hers; she had it set, and gave it to him the evening before he left England; and on his receiving it, he vowed never to part with it but with his life. Smith adds, from that hour she became evidently worse, but quite composed; except that she sometimes expressed a wish to know if the count was killed at the battle. This Smith on inquiry found to be the fact; perhaps killed by the very wretch I bought the brooch of. Smith says he was very loth to acquaint her that he was dead; but a list of the killed and wounded unfortunately fell into her hands, and informed her of his fate. She seemed to derive a degree of consolation from the idea that he had not parted with

this little testimony of her affection, while life was spared him; and more so that she should soon follow him. She lived only six weeks after I sent her to Vittoria. Poor unfortunate girl! to meet with such an unprincipled wretch! Such sensibility and strong attachment might have been the comfort and delight of some worthy man.

I will write to you again before I leave town.

C. BELMONT.

LETTER XXVI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Oct. 9, 1813.

WHAT a miserable day has this been! Yet have we now reason to flatter ourselves my sister's disorder has taken a favorable turn, as she has been asleep nearly seven hours

we are in hopes, when she awakes, she will be more rational and collected than she has been since her illness. Mr. Howard always sends the servant to inform me how his mistress is, in the morning. To-day the report was very unfavorable; and, when I met him at breakfast, he appeared extremely low and dejected; said my sister had no rest the whole night, nor could the women persuade her to change her dress; and he feared compulsion must be resorted to, if an alteration did not speedily take place. Yet notwithstanding this account, I thought when I entered her room, her eyes had not so fierce an expression as they had yesterday; and, for the first time, she allowed me to take her hand, though she was sitting in the same posture of melancholy as on the first day I saw her. I expressed my hope that she was better. "Don't you see, Charles, and know I am distracted?"---"Indeed, my dear sister, I am sensible

you are at this time heavily afflicted; but I hope, as you recover your health, you will be able to exert yourself. Misfortunes we are all liable to; and"— "Stop! leave off preaching;" she cried. "Horace wants nothing from any of us;—he has got a rich wife;—can dance ropes, and balance straws. Oh! I wish she could extract the thorn from my bosom: planted there too, for the sake of—of—her—husband." I took her hand again. "Time, my dear sister, aided by your own good sense, will"— She would not allow me to proceed.—"You are a fool, Charles; have I not told you to leave off preaching? I know my own sorrow. I have no window in my breast; else would you see the fallacy of your argument to one who— But I wish you would both leave the room, and not trouble me again 'till I send for you. Poor, soft, pappy fellows! a child can out-wit them."

She continued muttering to herself

for some time; but at last, to our great comfort, happily fell asleep. This was so favorable a change that the nurse was anxious to get her into her bed, which was effected without scarcely waking her. I prevailed on Mr. Howard to walk with me; and we entered more fully into Horace's situation.

Another letter from him this morning. A commission in the army is the only thing I can recommend. He certainly could live respectably upon the income arising from the estate that was Mrs. Cleveland Howard's; and Mr. C. Howard is now in town waiting for his brother and nephew appointing a day for settling the business attached to his giving Horace possession.

We returned from our walk a little before dinner; still Mrs. Howard was asleep. Dr. Manby desired she might not be disturbed.

It is now near eleven o'clock and she has not awoke yet. I am greatly

in hopes we shall find her in a more composed frame of mind, I shall then return to Melmoth House, and happiness.

C. BELMONT.

LETTER XXVII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Melmoth House, Oct. 10, 1813.

THE sleep of Mrs. Howard, from which we augured such a favorable issue, has indeed been attended with an eclaircissement that has filled us with astonishment. My sister continued to sleep 'till the usual hour of going to rest. Mr. Howard and myself retired with the most sanguine hopes of her convalescence.

I believe I overslept myself, and was awaked by Mr. Howard coming into my room about eight o'clock, in an agony of distress. He begged me

to get up immediately, saying that my sister was lost. "Lost!" I exclaimed; "not dead, I hope."---"I hope not;" he said, and left me under the greatest consternation. I hastily dressed myself, and left my room; anxious to obtain an explanation.

Falling in with the nurse, from her I learned the following particulars. Her mistress, she said, awoke soon after we retired, and desired a cup of chocolate; which she brought her. Mrs. Howard wept very much, which her attendant considered as a favorable prognostic of her recovery. She next desired the woman to bring her writing desk, which was in her dressing room. The nurse endeavoured to dissuade her from writing, but as she was afraid that by contradiction she would again become agitated, she brought the desk to her; and, Mrs. Howard having had so many hours sleep, she hoped no ill consequence would follow a compliance with her orders. My sister, the woman said,

sat up in her bed, and wrote for two hours; appeared often very much affected; sometimes weeping, and sighing bitterly. When her letter was finished, she said she should go to sleep again; and very kindly desired the nurse to go to bed, assigning as a reason, that she should sleep better, if left to herself. Seeing Mrs. Howard so quiet, and composed; and wanting rest herself, she yielded to her request, first drinking a glass of wine from a bottle Mrs. Howard ordered her to bring from a closet in the next room. This proves to have had laudanum in it. After taking it the woman said she fell into so sound a sleep herself, that she did not awake 'till near eight o'clock the next morning, when the house-maid came in to light the fire. Her surprise was great to find that Mrs. Howard had left her bed. Every room in the house was searched without success. The house-maid then remarked that she had found

the front door unfastened, in the morning, though she was sure it was well secured the preceding evening. It appeared so necessary to gain all the intelligence possible to be collected from the nurse and the servants, that I would not suffer my own impatience, or that of Mr. Howard to carry me from the house 'till I was satisfied there was no one there implicated in this distressing affair. I intended to make some inquiry in the neighbourhood, when, on taking my hat, a letter fell from it. It was in my sister's hand writing, and directed to me. With great agitation and a trembling hand I broke the seal and read as follows.

MRS. HOWARD TO SIR CHARLES BELMONT.

COULD you, my dear brother, enter into the pangs of those, who suffer from the corroding throbs of a guilty conscience, you would

pity, though you must contemn your unhappy sister.

To relieve my mind of so heavy a burthen I have resolved to confess my guilt; that all the retribution possible may be made to the parties my wicked practices have injured; and I shall myself retire to some obscure situation to avoid that contempt, which I know and feel I deserve.

Where shall I begin but with the primary cause of my departure from the simple path of rectitude to that of art, duplicity, and base ingratitude,---my son? To aggrandize his fortunes have I been injuring the innocent; and cruelly added affliction to the broken hearted. How is it returned upon me by the very individual, for whom I have rendered myself obnoxious to all the worthy part of my own family, as well as that of my husband!

The estate, to which my son was heir, in the event of Mrs. C. Howard's

dying without children, you are well acquainted with; and six years having elapsed before such an event was announced, to disappoint my hopes, I wickedly flattered myself some accident might happen in favor of my son. About the same time Mrs. Melmoth died, leaving the whole of her property to Miss Melville. Here was another disappointment, as I had argued myself into the belief that, as my child was the only one in the family, who could not have offended this implacable relation, he would be considered her heir. For this notion and expectation I do not reproach myself.

Long before the death of Mrs. Melmoth I had conceived an unconquerable dislike to Miss Melville, which her generosity and conciliating manners to me could not subdue; but rather served to increase; and with the most determined malice in my heart, I had the mortification of seeing you, my dear Charles, fascina-

ted by her beauty and accomplishments; nor was she insensible to your merits. This was what I had dreaded, from the moment you had determined on going to Melmoth Park; and I resolved you should not go there without me. To share with Miss Melville my aunt's personal property, though considerable, did not satisfy my avaricious wishes for my son; and I placed that letter in the cabinet, which was found with my aunt's jewels: and which Miss Melville committed to the flames unopened. I had so well imitated Mrs. Melmoth's hand writing, that she would have been deceived; and in all probability very much distressed by the contents. As in Mrs. Melmoth's name I strongly recommended Horace to Miss Melville, observing, that though by a rash vow she had put it out of her own power to make that provision for one, who never had offended her, she had such confidence in her dear adopted daughter, as to

rest satisfied that a hint from her would be sufficient. That, in addition to the funded property, there was timber, which it would soon become necessary to fell; and was expected to produce fifty, or sixty thousand pounds. From these resources she thought there could be no difficulty in rendering young Howard independent of his parents.

Had Miss Melville fallen into the snare, I had laid for her, I was certain to derive some advantage from it, or gratification to the malignancy I felt towards that young woman; and, if you could not be induced to give up the profits arising from the sale of the timber, I had no doubt but that Miss Melville, from the principle on which she had hitherto acted, would sooner give up that moiety she had consented to accept of, than not comply with any injunction of her benefactress. A difference of opinion I flattered myself would arise between you and Miss Melville, and which

I was determined to effect, though in this instance it was rendered abortive by the destruction of my letter.

My other plan was to impress you with an idea that Miss Melville had a prior attachment. Mr. Brensly's strangely introducing himself to Miss Melville on her return from Bath, his offering himself, and being rejected, were known in the family, and were no secret to me; but the violence of my temper becoming uncontrolable, I was obliged to leave Melmoth House in the most painful uncertainty; and for some months was I a prey to revenge ungratified, and disappointed avarice.

Near the time of Mrs. C. Howard's expected confinement, business of the utmost importance required Cleveland's presence at Liverpool. Unwilling to leave his wife, it was with great difficulty she could prevail with him to go; though, as she assured him, she was in much better health than she had been for several

months. Unfortunately he yielded to her earnest entreaties; and in a few hours after he had left town a fire broke out in the next house, which raged with such violence as to threaten the destruction of the whole street. The fright brought on the expected event: poor Caroline was delivered of a female child, and died in a few minutes after its birth.

The only servant, I could prevail on to remain in the room during the dangerous state of her mistress, left it the moment she had ceased to breathe, and followed the example of the rest of the servants, who were occupied in securing their own clothes. I was left alone with the midwife, who in fear for her own safety was anxious to be gone, as the fire had began to make depredations on Cleveland's house. I desired the woman to send an undertaker, with a shell and proper people, to take the body of poor Caroline away, intending to have it brought back again, if the fire was got under.

No sooner was the woman gone, than a thought crossed me that I would conceal the infant. The utmost promptitude was necessary. I hastily wrapped the child up; and, with a few clothes, took it under my mantle; then, hurrying out of the house, carried it to a poor woman in the next street, who was newly recovered from her confinement. To her I gave the infant, desiring her to take care of it, as its mother was dead; and I should call on her again in a few hours, and reward her for her trouble. I hastened back to Cleveland's; and, just as I reached the house, a hearse from the undertaker's also arrived. The fire was got under; but the servant, who had witnessed Caroline's delivery, in endeavouring to save her own clothes, had perished in the flames. It was with some difficulty that I could get proper assistance to remove poor Caroline. This was at last effected; and the upper part of the house

only had suffered by the conflagration. The servants had been too busily employed about the fire and saving their own property, to think of the situation of their mistress; and being informed of her death, never inquired if there was a child left to deplore her loss.

On my return home I communicated to Mr. Howard the death of Caroline; and also the wicked falsehood of the infant being dead. He was, as I expected, very much shocked by this melancholy event. What would he have felt could he have imagined the heart of the woman, he called his wife, was insensible to the claims of humanity, and only alive to the avaricious hopes she was building upon the ruin of another's happiness!

The whole of that night was spent in planning the disposal of the child, the only obstacle between my son and valuable property. The devilish suggestion arose, that if I could but ac-

complish the imposing it on Miss Melville, and make you believe she gave it existence, every purpose of my heart would be gratified. I should by this means effect the ruin of the woman I detested, so far as depended on the depriving her of the affection and esteem of the man she loved; and I should also secure to my son that estate, for which I had for several years supposed he would not have a competitor. I was so elated with this scheme, that no difficulties seemed to great to be overcome; nor did it ever once occur to me that the very journey might probably cause the death of so young an infant.

I called the next day on the accoucheur; satisfied her demands; and told her the poor child died in a fit before morning. I went to Cleveland's house; gave directions for that part, which was injured by the fire, to be immediately repaired; and as I found the lower rooms might be put

in their usual state, I ordered the undertaker to have every thing prepared for removing the corpse of Mrs. C. Howard to George Street, should Cleveland, on his return, wish it. An inquest was held on the remains of the servant, who was interred the same evening. Mr. Howard was recovering from a fit of the gout, but not able to leave the house.

On the sixth day after the death of Caroline I pretended I had received a letter from a friend at Windsor, to say, Horace, who was on a visit there, was ill, and expressed great anxiety to see me. This fabrication had all the effect I wished by making Mr. Howard urgent for my leaving town immediately.

For the purpose of expedition I ordered four horses, and took a hack chaise, not chusing to venture in my own for fear of detection; nor any servant did I allow to go with me, for the same reason. I drove immediately to the nurse; told her a sister

of the infant's mother was so very anxious to have the child, that I was determined to take it to her; and persuaded the woman to go with me to take care of the child on the road. I soon found expeditious travelling would not suit such an infant; nor would it answer my purpose to arrive at Reading before dark. Various excuses I made for lingering on the road; and it was I think near ten o'clock when we stopped at the door of Dr. Syms. I had taken the child from the nurse before we entered the town; and, unobserved by her, I had put two or three drops of laudanum within its lips, that it might sleep when I wished to dispose of it. My success you are already acquainted with, though you were within a few minutes of meeting, and consequently detecting me; as you alighted from a chaise just as I stopped to put the anonymous letter, which you afterwards received, into the post-office.

It was necessary I should make my appearance at Windsor; but it was indispensable that I should first get rid of the nurse; therefore when we came to Binfield I sent her to town.

For a few hours I rested myself; and then proceeded to Windsor to see Horace, whom I found in good health, as I expected, though I expressed some surprise at finding him so. I staid the remainder of the morning there; and returned to London in the evening, happy, and charmed with the success all my plans seemed to promise.

I arrived at my own door in a state of mind seldom or ever experienced by me before; and I followed the servant to the drawing room with a degree of cheerfulness so unusual that even he cast an inquiring eye for the cause. How transient is happiness arising from base motives! Mine was of but a short duration. The first object that presented itself was

Cleveland Howard on the floor, in an agony of distress, weeping over a miniature of his lost Caroline. "Oh! my Caroline!" he cried, "had your infant been but spared me, I should have had some consolation, some alleviation to my grief!" I was petrified; but repentance was not yet begun. I had not tasted of the bitter cup of disappointment, and ingratitude, in the being, nearest and dearest to my heart.

Guilt made my limbs tremble under me, which my husband kindly attributed to a sensibility to another's woe, unknown to me.

Absorbed in his own misery, Cleveland noticed not my being in the room. Indeed his senses seemed affected by the suddenness of the blow, nor could we prevail on him to take any nourishment that night; and for several days he declined to see any one, except his brother. Yet my inhuman heart refused him that comfort I had it in my power to administer. Not

a notion of the existence of Caroline's child seemed to have entered the thoughts of any one; and I rested for a few days in the perfect assurance that I should be free from all suspicion of imposing that or any other child on Miss Melville, until I was alarmed in a public auction room by a man accusing me of the very fact. Though he named none of the parties, I was so terrified, that I was in danger of exposing myself, had I not been relieved by the general outcry to turn him out. Fearful the man had too good grounds for so daring an attack, and would not be easily put off, I waited 'till nearly all the company were gone; and, as I imagined my plaid had perhaps led to my detection, I complained of heat, and left it in the auction room, saying I would send for it. My veil I took off in going down stairs; and having procured a coach went home without farther molestation. Had I not taken this precaution, I should

probably have had another rencounter, as I saw the same man standing at the corner of Russel Street.

Several months passed on with nothing to disturb me but the melancholy state of poor Clevelaud, whose misery I had not the humanity to relieve, yet could not bear to witness the constant reproaches his sufferings inflicted upon myself; and I prevailed on Mr. Howard to persuade his brother to return with Mr. Brensly to Bath. By the means of my servant, who corresponded with one belonging to Miss Melville, I heard of the introduction of the child, and that it was doing well.

On your return from Reading in consequence of an order to attend the secretary of state, I was convinced by your countenance, Charles, that you were as completely the dupe of my contrivances as I could wish; and I had the satisfaction of seeing you depart tormented by a suspicion, no one but myself had the power

of removing. I knew you to be fastidious, and strongly attached to Miss Melville; but your pride once wounded by placing your affection and confidence on an unworthy object, I cherished the hope that this disappointment might operate against your forming a connection, which would exclude my son from inheriting the Melmoth property.

I will be candid in confession, as I have been insidious in practice; and it now only remains for me to account for a letter to Lord Headly, which was fabricated by me in the name of Dr. Syms. The breath of slander had not yet passed a censure on the character of Miss Melville. You only, my brother, could for a moment entertain sentiments inimical to her virtue.

I was informed of Lord Darnly's attentions to her at Brighton; and had no doubt of her accepting an offer so every way superior to any expectation she could have formed,

even if she were still considered as the heiress to Mrs. Melmoth. Lady Mitford too, I was aware, encouraged and promoted it by every means in her power. What then was to become of Caroline's infant? neglected, or perhaps committed to the care of my late aunt's pensioners; and the young woman, I hated from my inmost heart, raised to a rank in life, that I felt would often subject me to intolerable mortification. This I was determined, at all events, to prevent; and wrote such a letter to Lord Headly as I judged well calculated to answer my purpose.

I might have spared myself this additional act of criminality against Miss Melville, as I soon learned she had refused Lord Darnly; and one more to my severe feelings as a mother was preparing to convince me how fallacious all our plans for happiness are, if not built upon sound principles.

Horace I seldom saw, except

when he wanted money. No control whatever had I over him. His faults I either weakly concealed from his father; or joined in opposing his authority: and often put my husband to great inconvenience to supply the extravagance of my son.

We went to Southampton. Horace, having had a violent contention with me, the day after we arrived there, left us without any ceremony; and the first intelligence we had of him, except his having taken up money of his father's banker, was by the same post that announced your marriage also.

Oh! let me not dwell on the retrospect of that moment, when my mind became a chaos of despair. All my wicked devices to have such a termination! And then poor Cleveland's loss of his child came so forcibly to my heart, as to produce something like contrition. I had doubly robbed my husband's brother; and, for whom? was a question, that drove

me nearly mad. My son united to a girl exhibited at fairs; her person exposed to the vulgar freedom of a mob usually attending at such places. I cannot see either of them; nor will I, after this exposure, be tormented either by your commisseration or contempt. I am going to a distant part of England; perhaps to Wales. I will write to Mr. Howard, as soon as I have fixed upon my residence; and also draw upon him for a supply to enable me to live in seclusion; where by sincere repentance for the past I may render myself more worthy of that affection and confidence I have so deservedly forfeited.

I have now concluded my painful confession, from which I claim no merit, as, had not all my projects for the advancement of my son been frustrated by the object, for whom I committed such enormous offences, I should probably have continued in the same course as opportunity offered.

May you, my dear brother, be happy; but make no attempt to see your wretched sister,

A. HOWARD.

The two preceding Letters enclosed in

LETTER XXVIII.

FROM

LADY BELMONT TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Melmoth House, Oct. 12, 1813.

YOU will, I am sure, rejoice with me, my dear Maria, and you, the revered friend of my father, that the parents of my little Emily are known, though alas, as you are informed by reading these letters, Sir Charles has allowed me to send for your perusal, one only is living to claim the dear child. Oh! how light does my heart feel at this mo-

ment! Our sex, you know, Maria, are said to take great delight in describing their sensations upon all occasions of surprise, whether from fright, pain, or pleasure. You will therefore pardon me for availing myself of this privilege to relate to you the astonishment so unexpected a developement produced in me. This interesting discovery, I understand, was made but a few hours before I had the happiness of seeing my dear Belmont at Melmoth House. I had just returned from visiting good Mrs. Syms, when my beloved husband surprised me by his unexpected, though wished for return; and his manner of meeting me was so truly alarming I was quite terrified. Throwing himself at my feet, the moment he saw me, "Emily, my beloved wife! is it possible for you to pardon your credulous husband? Oh! most angelic, best of women, you must despise me. Can you forgive your Belmont?" I threw my arms round

his neck, entreating him to rise; "Tell me, I conjure you, what all this means. I know of no fault, you have been guilty of, except the too great indulgence, shewn to your happy Emily."---"My dearest life, you are all goodness. A stranger is impatiently waiting to be introduced to you; and the father of your little protegè is here."---"The father of Emily!" I cried in astonishment. "Sir Charles, do explain; tell me who---what you mean. Without any answer, but a smile of delight, he left me; and returned again in a few minutes with a gentleman, whom he introduced as Mr. Cleveland Howard, and father of little Emily. Eagerly he cast his eyes round the room in expectation of seeing his little girl. I ran for the dear child; and the moment I entered, the anxious father took her from me, almost smothering her with caresses. Tears for some time deprived him of the powers of speech. At last returning the sweet

innocent to my arms, though without quitting her, he cried, "Oh! my beloved Caroline! that you could participate with me in the joyful recovery of our lost child!" Retiring to a distant part of the room; "Pardon this impious wish! thou art happier, far happier than in thy mortal state!" My tears could not be restrained. I wept in agony: nor were the eyes of Sir Charles without a tear of sensibility.

Advancing towards me, again he took the child, who was nearly crying. "Oh! Lady Belmont, it never can be in my power, or this dear child's, to repay you any part of the obligation you have laid us under by your tender care of this little treasure." I really was so affected by this interview that it was with some difficulty I could assure him he owed me none, as the care of her had been often an amusement to me. All parties now became more composed; and Emily began to be well satisfied with her new acquaintance.

After dinner, Sir Charles gave me a letter to read, accompanied by one to his friend Col. Yorke; and one from Mrs. Howard. What a variety of emotions did her letter excite! nor could I refrain from again weeping at reading those expressions of antipathy to myself; as well as for the crimes that had occasioned so much misery to us all.

Mr. Howard came late the last evening. He and his brother are to continue at Melmoth House for some time; even during our intended excursion. Little Emily, as I call the dear child, I have offered to continue the care of. She has never been baptized. That ceremony is to take place next monday. Caroline is to be added to that of Emily. Write to me soon I beseech you.

LETTER XXIX.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO LADY BELMONT.

Bath Easton. October 15, 1813.

My dear Emily,

I HAVE made an immense purchase of sackcloth, and a ton of ashes, as a present for Mrs. Howard. Pray give me a hint, if in her going to and fro upon the face of the earth you think any of her limbs may touch Bath, that I may be off in time; for I am sure I should be apprehensive of a concussion of the earth, from the effects of which the village of Bath Easton would hardly escape.

In her everlasting confession, I don't recollect she once expresses sorrow for her offences, or begs to be forgiven by those, she has injured. No! believe me, it is her pride that is

wounded, not her conscience; and I wish, to oblige me, she would take herself out of the world. There can be no peace upon earth while that evil spirit is at large.

One circumstance I thank her for; —the disclosure of the contents of that letter. I always was anxious to know what was in it; and vexed enough with you for burning it unread. I should have been completely taken in, I am very sure. My good father is delighted; and conn'd over and over again Mrs. Howard's acknowledgement of her shameful conduct, as well as one or two letters from you, with which I have indulged him. I dare say he can repeat them by heart.

Horace Hopeful; what a connection has he made! I really believe it is the same O'Kelly and his attendant, who were at Bromley, when we were visiting at Mrs. Davison's; and who was admitted to shew some tricks with cards in the evening.

I am confident it is the same name; and I well remember a pretty girl, in gaudy attire, parading the streets upon a gay horse; a monkey on another, with two lads, dressed very fine, attending her. A multitude of little dirty boys and girls following with huzzas; and shouting with delight at seeing so splendid an assemblage. Oh! I beg pardon, my dear, I forgot I was writing to the aunt of this accomplished young lady. If my heart could feel pity for so great a sinner it would be excited by an incident so truly mortifying to a fond parent as this connection must be to Mrs. Howard.

My Brensly is quite enraged; and I think, if they were to meet, a duel must ensue, for making use of his name to injure and torment one, whom he considers as much above our sex in general as Mrs. Howard is below.

You give me no opinion of either of the Howards. Cleveland I am

well acquainted with; and think him very gentlemanly: I believe he would be handsome if he had two eyes, instead of one. Brensly says he has two; only has been obliged to wear a shade over one, in consequence of an injury aggravated by a cold before I saw him. He may have a dozen; but only one made its appearance at Bath.

I think Mrs. Howard would do well to be friends with O'Kelly; she will find it but dismal to be left only to her own reflections. I will contrive a skin for her; she would be an excellent Hyena.

My dear father is so very much better, that he has it in contemplation to pay you a visit. And I promise you I will behave so very like a dutious wife that the good folks I am to meet at Melmoth House shall not know but that I am one.

Harriet would have no objection to be of the party, if you give the invitation. Adieu, my dear Emily:

May the machinations of your enemies be ever wrecked on the rock of disappointment as those of the Howard's have been!

M. BRENSLY.

P. S. How came it that Richard did not know Mrs. Howard's person?

LETTER XXX.

LADY BELMONT TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Melmoth House, October 20, 1813.

I ASSURE you, my dear Maria, I am very much pleased with Mr. Cleveland Howard; his spirits are better than they were; and I find him an intelligent companion, and an agreeable man. His little girl he doats on; and the child is equally fond of him. Mr. Howard is a heavy dull character; scarcely ever moves from his chair; no amusement seems

to please, or displease him. He seldom reads, even a newspaper; except to con over advertisements, or paragraphs, that concern East India affairs. Poor man! insensible as he appears, yet surely he must be made very unhappy by the conduct of his wife and son.

A friend of Mr. Howard from Richmond was here yesterday. The account he gives of the girl, Horace has married, is that she has not been with him to fairs, &c. these five years. I think it probable however that you saw them at Bromley, as that was about six years ago. The gentleman says she bears a good character. O'Kelly is supposed to have realized twenty thousand pounds; and as he has no other relation but his grandaughter, has declared she should inherit it, if she married a gentleman; and for that purpose he gave her a certain sum to spend every summer at some public place.

Mr. Howard has heard from Mrs.

Howard this morning. She has fixed her residence in a cottage at the foot of Snowdon Hill, in Wales; poor man he appears better satisfied, now he knows where his wife is. And her distance from Melmoth House is not a source of regret to either of us.

Are you serious, my dear Maria? Will your good father come to Melmoth House? And do you think he can do so without injury to his health? If he can, how delighted shall I be to introduce him to my beloved husband, Sir James, and Lady Mitford; nor must the good Syms's be forgotten.

I am now very busily employed preparing for my excursion into Kent, and Sussex. My dear Belmont frequently goes with me to see the poor pensioners, to whose comfort he has greatly contributed by giving them some books, that may both amuse and instruct them in their duty. Mrs. Alfree is, I find, his principal

favorite; and has a little present oftener than her companions. Her good wishes, which so distressed me at the time, are always remembered.

Love and kind regard to you and your's.

E. BELMONT.

P. S. Richard was absent on a visit to his sick father when Mrs. Howard was at Melmoth House. Direct your next to me at Pevensey Castle, Sussex.

LETTER XXXI.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Battle. October 26, 1813.

YOUR opinion, my good friend, of my sister's letter I can but too well anticipate, to be desirous of hearing it in the strong language you

would chuse for the conveyance of your sentiments. I am too deeply mortified by the recital of such disgraceful conduct in one so nearly related to me, not to wish it to be buried in oblivion. Poor unhappy woman! she had no occasion to request that I should keep at a distance from her; I am not anxious to see her 'till I am well assured her very nature has undergone an entire change.

We left Melmoth House last friday for Sunny Vale. With what different emotions did I enter my mansion there to those I experienced a few months since. Hope, attended by fear, then occupied my mind. Now under the delightful certainty of being beloved, and secure of the person and affection of the most exalted of women, every place I am in, blessed with her society, appears a paradise.

Having a little curiosity to see Battle Abbey we came here last eve-

ning, too late for our purpose, Emily being desirous of taking a drawing of the beautiful gateway, so justly admired by travellers. From the circumstance of my ancestor having borne so distinguished a part in the event this Abbey was built to commemorate, I feel a peculiar interest in acquiring all the information I possibly can respecting it. We wandered about for sometime, 'till meeting a gentleman in the neighbourhood, he very civilly offered his services; and with him we explored several of the cells curiously constructed, and extending to a considerable distance; but most of them in too ruinous a state to be entered.

The only place, that bears the least resemblance to any part of the architecture of Sunny Vale, is that under what was the refectory, which our informant said was supposed to have been the monk's chapel; the abbot having his private chapel in the abbey.

From the terrace our friend pointed out the situation of the place where the conqueror landed, and the several posts where he halted; and near the garden gate, where the ruins of a church may yet be discovered, he said, the brave Harold fell.

We next viewed that noble edifice, the gateway. Here our informer could give us but little intelligence as to the time in which it was built; but told us he remembered there were places of punishment, which doubtlessly were in use when the abbot was in the exercise of his power to pardon or punish criminals within his jurisdiction. A large room, denominated the Court Hall, had been used for civil purposes within the last thirty years.

I have presented the gentleman to whose civility we are so much indebted, with a schedule of the ancient privileges granted to the abbot of this noted place. I prevented Emily from completing her sketch

of the gateway, as I was apprehensive of her taking cold; and have promised to return with her when the season is more suitable for such an amusement.

We are now departing for Pevensey Castle, where we are expected this evening.

Adieu.

C. BELMONT.

LETTER XXXII.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO LADY BELMONT.

Bath Easton, Oct. 28. 1813.

TO Pevensey Castle I direct this letter; and hope it will find you my dear Emily, and Sir Charles, arrived in perfect safety. Lord Glenmore is with us; and I believe we shall fix our quarters at Bath Easton for ever, and aye; his lordship having purchased an excellent house, which

we have been in for some days; and very kindly presented it to me.

That I may not disgrace his lordship's taste, I intend to have a grand rout next week; and have already sent out cards to all Bath;—a famous cram:—husbands justling against their wives, who have not come within arm's length of each other for months before;—lovers separated, who had just vowed never to part;—rouge, from the blooming cheek of sixty-five, brushed off by the white plume nodding on the head of some fidgety damsel of fifty.

I don't know to what degree of perfection Brensly will arrive; he has been poring over old law books to perfect himself in the duties of a magistrate; and, being now in the commission of the peace, has had the audacity to appropriate one room in my house for the express purpose of administering justice. Very impudent in him, you will allow; and he follows it up too, by not permitting

me to be present upon these entertaining occasions. My dressing room window looks exactly down upon all comers, and goers; and I seldom fail to mark the difference of countenance, on coming and returning. Generally speaking, they come grinning, and saucy; go off pale, and sheepish. One man has been once a week for some time to swear his parish, or complain against the officers; and, I dare say, will continue this amusement all the winter, as his worship orders him into the kitchen to have a dinner, or a lunch, which is much the same. If this should prove an increasing trade I tell Brensly he must provide an additional cook.

I had a little curiosity to see how my good man conducted himself in his magisterial capacity; and, for that purpose, borrowed my housemaid's attire; dying my complexion and eye brows. So completely was I metamorphosed, that no human being could know me. Poor old

Anne too I persuaded to aid me; and submit to be disguised, and take me as her daughter before his worship. Evening was rather an inconvenient time; but as my husband is too gallant to think any thing a trouble to oblige the ladies, after a few questions from an impudent footman, we were admitted, and ushered into his sanctum sanctorum. His worship soon followed, and I could not help quaking a little. "Well, my good woman," addressing Anne, "what is your business?—O! I need not ask," looking significantly at me. "Where do you come from?"—"Scarborough, an please your worship."—"That is a considerable distance from Bath Easton;—sent, I suppose, by the parish; but where is the officer?"—"He will be here presently, your honor. I was ordered to take my daughter off in time; and, hearing your honor lived near Bath, we have followed you, and hope your worship wont refuse to make my daughter an

allowance for her misfortune."---"That must depend upon the situation of her seducer.---Young woman," now came my turn, "I suppose you understand the nature of an oath, and that you are not to add to your crime by being guilty of perjury?"---"No, your honor." I cried, "I beant so wicked as all that; nor shall you, for all you live in a fine house frighten me out of the truth. You be a false hearted man, so you be; and deceived a poor girl by promising me marriage; so you did." I here began to cry most woefully; and his worship's wrath was rising, declaring he could not understand, what I could mean, as he never had seen me before. "If your worship be Squire Brensly, you cannot have forgotten Sally Matt; and telling me I was the prettiest girl in Scarborough."---"That was deceiving you, to be sure, or you must be strangely altered in a few months; and I advise you to go before some other magistrate to make

your complaints."—"No! hang me if I do!" I sat myself down.—"You may think to get rid of me by pretending as how you don't know me; but it wont do. I know what's what; and madam shall hear of your tricks, and all Bath. Nor will I go out of this here house, 'till you gives me a good sum to keep me genteelly all winter." Brensly began to storm, and exclaimed,—"Give you money, after such an impudent accusation! Not a single shilling shall you have of mine; and I will instantly order my servants to shew you the door." Leaving the room at the same time himself. Anne gave a hint to the servant, who was going to execute his master's orders not very gently. I waited a few minutes 'till I thought the perturbed magistrate had joined Lord Glenmore, Lady Harriet, and my father. I then followed, and boldly opening the door, put my head in. I really thought Brensly would have laid violent hands on me.

I advanced a little way into the room. Lord Glenmore shook his stick at me; bidding me begone, or I should be committed. My good father not quite assured of the falsity of my accusation, sat a silent though anxious spectator. I went up to him; "Are you too for turning your Maria out?" in my natural voice. How astonished did the dear fellow look to discover his own wife in the person of his tormentor; and very much did he regret that he did not commit me to bridewell. Harriet had left the room on my appearance, fearful of some indelicate discoveries.

I rejoice that she Cain has taken herself out of our beat. Repenting is sad harrassing amusement. Her turbulent spirit can never stand it long, I am very sure; and as she has chosen the foot of a mountain for her residence, the punishment of Sisyphus would afford her admirable exercise; and I beg it may be recommended to her, as salutary for her health.

Edward Lewis and his pretty miminy-piminy sister called on me this morning. Edward, throwing himself on the sofa,---"My dear Mrs. Brensly, you know something of the Howards. Horace is quite dish'd. 'Pon honor! its a very shocking affair; never can make his appearance at Brooke's, or among any of our set again."---"I never was so astonished," cried Juliet, "I really believed I should have fainted at the extravagant idea, that there was a possibility of having such a creature introduced to one. I am sure I should expect a train of monkeys to follow her, he, he, he!" and, "he, he, he!" echoed the brother; "that would be vastly droll, 'pon honor. And then in another part of the family, it is reported, a little child has started up on a sudden. How extremely wonderful! but do, dear Mrs. Brensly, tell us how, and all about it."---"I think," I replied, "I must apply to you for information; you seem to know more of the sub-

ject than I do."—"Oh! how cruel! I am dying to hear more of that poor distressed family. I am really quite miserable about them. Poor dear Mrs. Howard I dare say suffers inconceivably. I must be going; I am so unhappy, I cannot endure to stay any where. Good bye; good bye! Mrs. Brensly." "'Pon honor, its a very shocking, a very shocking affair, indeed!" So I thought, to be bored by their nonsense; and the most agreeable part of their visit was, its being short. Our united love to you, and yours.

MARIA BRENSLY.

LETTER XXXIII.

LADY BELMONT TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Eastbourn, Oct. 28, 1813.

My dear Maria,

I WRITE this from the village of Eastbourn. It is one of the

most enchanting spots you can conceive. The variety of rides and walks, I am told, are delightful; and I shall persuade Sir Charles to indulge me with a few days to enjoy them. Most of the company are gone. The fields of corn must be a fine, and gratifying sight; particularly when the crops are abundant.

Sir Charles had written to inform Mr. Jackson that we should be at the castle in the evening before last; and, as he had offered beds, we should prefer being there to going to the inn, which is scarcely entitled to that appellation, and being very small, would be noisy and inconvenient. I have frequently, even in Mrs. Melmoth's time, heard strange accounts of the steward, but did not expect to see quite so eccentric a character as Mr. Jackson, or one so extremely ignorant and weak as his wife.

The castle must have been of large dimensions, and capable of making great resistance to a besieging ene-

my on the old system, as in its present state it encloses a considerable plot of ground: only one part is habitable which Mr. Jackson's family occupy. It was a beautiful moonlight evening. Near the castle we observed several soldiers straggling about, and a sentinel parading before the gate. A bugle announced our arrival. The gates being opened, we drove up to the door, at which was standing a little short man in a robe like that I have seen the lord mayor of London wear, on public occasions; and an immense wig of the sixteenth century. We were both surprised; and Sir Charles inquired of a soldier, standing near the carriage, if the gentleman in the robe was Mr. Jackson. "A!" replied the man, "and he wool never look like any other christian." We alighted; Sir Charles advancing to speak to Mr. Jackson: he retreated, though with some difficulty, as his dress must have been originally intended for a man

half as tall again as the present wearer. Jackson spoke not; but, waving his hand, marched majestically before us. We followed our conductor in silent amazement, and were shewn into a good sized parlour; the only sitting room I believe, they have; when suddenly turning towards us putting his wig even, which had got a little awry, and hemming two or three times, in a squeaking voice he thus addressed us. "May it please you, most noble Sir Charles Belmont, to permit your faithful steward humbly to approach you, with a heart filled with the sincerest wishes for your honor, and prosperity? I beg leave to offer my hearty congratulations upon your safe return to these your lawful domains. I shall ever think it my indispensable duty to pray that the hearts and affections of your happy tenantry may be the just reward of your paternal care, and protection. And in the name, and behalf of your dutiful tenants, I hum-

bly address our noble master with our united congratulations on his marriage. And you," turning to me with his eyes shut, "the gracious consort of the noble Sir Charles Belmont, will, we doubt not, imitate the fair and constant Penelope by your mild, and patient endurance of the absence of your lord and master, should his services be again required to visit foreign climes; and, by your example, reform the degeneracy of your sex, that there may not be found a Xantippe in the land we live in. The energy of a Demosthenes, or the eloquence of a Cicero could"--

Here a te, he! from behind the window curtain, happily put an end to Mr. Cicero's oration, but not to the ludicrous scene that was to ensue. The te, he! from behind the curtain proved to come from a boy of about twelve or thirteen years of age, son of the orator; nor was he the only one so concealed. Mrs. Jackson, anxious no doubt to hear

and admire her husband's eloquence, was placed there also. To be so interrupted was more than the patience of our philosopher could bear; and, with a sharp gripe of the poor boy's arm, he turned him out of the room, crying with pain, and exclaiming, "Oh! pray, father; pray, father!" 'till he was released, and the door shut. I believe his wife expected to share the same fate, as she never ceased to express her admiration, saying, "It was very fine; very fine indeed! what a memory my dear good man has! Only think, your honor, Mr. Jackson was but three days learning all that speech."—"Adone, adone, wife; it was all extempore."—"Temper! I am sure I am not out of temper," replied the humble wife.

A drum now beat the tattoo. "Pray, Mr. Jackson," asked Sir Charles, "what is the meaning of your having military about the castle?"—"Very few; very few indeed, your honor.

Some are obstinate, and would not obey my summons: two of my own men are in the local militia, of which I am lieutenant. One of my men being a drummer, I have the tattoo beat every night at nine o'clock: the other I have ordered to stand sentry." Sir Charles begged he would dismiss the sentinel, as he was no military man.

A neat girl came in to lay the cloth, in preparation for supper. We could with difficulty prevail with these good people to sit down. To be sure, the poor little man would have been quite lost; and he requested permission to withdraw, and unrobe; Mrs. Jackson being left to entertain us. She is rather pretty; and loves to hear herself talk unchecked by her husband. No sooner had he quitted the room than she observed, that it was right to take care of so valuable a dress, which had belonged to her grandmother's father, when he was lord mayor of

London. "It is very little the worse for wear," she said, "though he used to wear it in the thedral, and all the pretty little charity children with him. The king, riding about London one day, met him. Grandmother's father knew how to behave himself; so he dropped down upon his knees in the street, for all the world as if he had been at church. The king brushed a sword over his head, and new christened him; and ever after he was called sir, or saint simon. But, dear heart! what use was it making him company for quality without giving him the means to do with; for the king put him in his bench the year after his christening. It was a very spiteful act though, and very ungrateful; for grandmother's father gave a deal of roast beef and strong beer away to make people royal, when the king was crowned."

Family anecdotes were here interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Jackson with a handkerchief tied

about his head to prevent his taking cold from the loss of his large wig; and he was followed by the girl bringing in supper, the first dish consisting of something, the very smell of which deprived me of all appetite: of course I resolved not to touch that, and two or three other things that were equally offensive to the smell, or sight. Sir Charles was as little disposed to partake of any thing so savory; and declined eating any thing hot for supper; but observed if he had any cold meat in the house, he should prefer that: and I declared in favor of dry toast.

Disappointment and mortification struck poor Jackson dumb; and in his confusion, he mistook the back for the edge of the knife he was carving the beef with for Sir Charles. Mrs. Jackson could not suppress her astonishment at the preference Sir Charles had made in favor of cold beef. "Well, to be sure;" she cried, "refuse such fine victuals, that my

poor husband cooked all himself; for I know nothing about such outlandish dishes.

From the heat of cooking, and exercise of carving, Mr. Jackson became very warm; and unbuttoning his waistcoat, wiping his face, and loosening his handkerchief, he found himself more comfortable: and on his wife saying, he had searched every pond and puddle within a mile of the castle for frogs, and not one could he procure, being the wrong time of the year, "I told my husband that perhaps toads would do as well; and there are plenty in the vaults under the castle; and they are never out of season."—"What my wife tells your honor is perfectly true: I did use my utmost endeavours to procure some frogs; knowing your honor had lived a great deal in France, I did presume you would be gratified by having a nice fricassee, the production of your own domains. I was unfortunate in my endeavours; these creatures ha-

ving retired to their winter quarters, I have got you an Italian dish, which you must often have met with, when you visited Italy, that nursery of arts and sciences, as it is so justly called." He then offered to help his wife from the savory dish before him, which she declined by saying, "You know, love, I cannot endure oil in any thing; but I hope, my dear, you will enjoy it yourself." Mr. Jackson thought it necessary to eat some of his own cookery; but having a plain English stomach, it refused to admit this Italian dish of pigeons fried in oil and garlick; and he was obliged to leave the table for a few minutes. On his return, I requested to be shewn to my room: in truth I could no longer endure the smell of the Italian dish. Mrs. Jackson rose to accompany me, her husband desiring her to replenish the lamp. "Not with oil, my dear; Betty says you used every drop to fry the pigeons in."

Happy was I when I could breathe a little fresh air by opening the window of my apartment, in which there was an immense fire. Sir Charles came up soon after me; and we sat talking over the events of the evening 'till a very late hour; and concluded on taking up our residence here for a few days, returning to redress grievances; and arranging for the disposal of the property at Pevensey.

Lady Belmont in continuation.

I left off, my dear Maria, very abruptly to accompany Sir Charles in a drive on the downs.

We found the air too cold to derive from it the enjoyment I expected, though I was amazingly struck by the grandeur of the scenery before me. A view of the country, which is interspersed by a number of villages, seems a relief to the eye, which has been dwelling for sometime on the fine expanse of water to the

right and left; and dazzled by the brilliancy of the sunbeams playing upon the waves. A chain of hills, of which Beachy Head forms the most conspicuous part, affords delightful rides, and the contemplative mind, is led irresistibly to the great creator of the universe. In a dell is plainly to be distinguished the form of a Roman encampment; while the vast number of mounds upon the higher grounds informs the traveller of the sad havock war had made among the human race in former times, as well as those of our own. But I must carry you back to Pevensey Castle the morning after our arrival there, as I think few curiosities in nature exceed our steward and his wife.

After breakfast we walked in the garden, which is enclosed by the wall of the castle. As we approached a kind of rampart next the sea, Sir Charles observed a newly erected building, like a chimney, solitarily

rising out of the shingles. Belmont inquired the nature of it. "Was it an obelisk?"—"No, your honor," replied Mr. Jackson, "it is a small observatory."—"Small indeed," cried Sir Charles, "for I should think it impossible for any human being to make his way to the top of that building."—"Your honor is mistaken; I can go up, and there enjoy the superlative delight of contemplating the heavenly bodies, unmolested."—"Don't say unmolested, Mr. Jackson," exclaimed his wife, "for you know the last fifth of November the boys threw squibs and rockets 'till you was forced to come down."—"Oh! don't mention it, wife! Ever fresh in my too retentive memory is the cruelty resulting from ignorance and envy at my superiority over the grovling crew, that is perpetually waging war against men of genius. Would your honor think it possible? that the very first time I attempted to ascend my observatory, some vile

miscreant had daubed the inside with damp soot; and as it is but just wide enough to admit me, my clothes brushed the walls; which was so great an annoyance to me, that, before I could fix my glass, I was obliged to return home. An impudent dirty boy, calling *sweep*, and following me. Unfortunately, I left my telescope there. However I was not quite disheartened; and after getting my observatory swept and washed, I once more made an attempt to enjoy the luxury of feasting my occular senses by viewing Venus, who was that night shining with all her resplendent beauties to charm us mortals into enthusiastic admiration of her loveliness." Mrs. Jackson's patience being quite exhausted, she put an end to her husband's raptures, by exclaiming, "It is enough to provoke any woman to hear her husband talk so of nobody knows who, and never praise his own wife; but he was disappointed,

and I was very glad he was."---"My dear," replied the astronomer, "I mean no disrespect to you; and when you are among the stars, I will sometimes pay homage to you. The disappointment Mrs. Jackson alludes to was indeed very mortifying. I ascended my observatory to enjoy the finest evening, that ever presented itself to the imagination of an astronomer. I set the glass in hopes of bringing Venus nearer to my view; and she appeared only like a drop of rain on a dirty window. Amazed at so extraordinary a metamorphosis, I applied my eye repeatedly, but to no purpose. In the agony of disappointment, I cried, "O! thou coquet, thus it is you serve your votaries; as we pursue, you retreat." Tired at length I returned home, bringing my glass with me; when, on taking it to pieces, I discovered that some enemy had substituted pieces of mildewed window glass for my grand magnifier." To forbear laughing at

the disasters of the astronomer was next to impossible; and we are of the same opinion with the tenants, that Jackson is at times deranged; and the poor woman excessively weak; though, being very industrious, she takes great care of her family.

Sir Charles going with Mr. Jackson to examine the state of the castle, I returned with Mrs. Jackson. While she went to attend her domestic concerns, I was left to amuse myself. An old magazine in the window presented itself. I took it up, and it happened to open, where an account is given of an address carried up by the lord mayor, and aldermen, to congratulate his late majesty on his return from Hanover. Mrs. Jackson finding me reading, took up a paper I had not seen fall; and presenting it to me, "Read this, my lady, it is my husband's speech, you heard last night." And indeed it proved to be the same the orator pronounced; and, with a very little

alteration; the same as the lord mayor's, with the addition of a few lines on our marriage. The reading it has enabled me to write it for the edification of Mr. Brensly, should he ever be inclined to distinguish himself as an orator.

This poor woman is in admiration at her husband's wisdom and learning, as appeared most fully yesterday. After the relation of Jackson's astronomical misfortunes I had a sufficient proof. She told me that her husband was certainly a very learned man; and could see what no one else could; and made her fear sometimes he was a little crazed.—"And what do you think, my lady? My husband talks of lions and bears among the stars 'till he makes us afraid to go out of doors at night: for you know, my lady, if any of them should get loose and fall down amongst us, what a terrible thing that would be! Yet my husband does not seem afraid, because

he knows how to manage them better than we do. I had almost forgot, my lady," continued this poor woman, "to tell you that my husband made an almanack once, as sure as I am a living woman; and only one little mistake in it."---"What might that be, Mrs. Jackson?"---"Only this, my lady, that the great red letter for sunday he put down on saturday. This being to be used just after the limping games in Mr. Williams's barn, we were all a little confused like; and dressed, and went to church; and it happening to be a saint's day by other people's almanacks, the church was open; but the sunday following, according to my husband's almanack, we went and found the doors shut. We waited there a long time. My husband sent to the minister, who returned a very uncivil message to Mr. Jackson, and declared the church doors should not be opened that day; which was very ungrateful, as Mr. Jackson had made

him a present of one of his almanacks."

Sir Charles entertaining all the tenants at the castle to-day, I requested to be left here; and have employed most of my time in writing to you the events of the few hours we were at the castle, as Sir Charles told Mr. Jackson we were going to Eastbourn for a few days, but would spend some hours at Pevensey every morning, after the next. I could not have supported a whole week with Mr. and Mrs. Jackson: true I might have remained in my bed room, or walked about when Belmont was engaged in business; but as poor Mrs. Jackson seemed anxious to pay me every civility and attention in her power, I could not find in my heart to say I wished to be alone.

Adieu.

Lady Belmont in continuation.

This morning we made a little excursion to Herstmonceux, a grand and beautiful building, that has greatly the appearance of a palace. There is little in the interior to gratify the curiosity of the traveller, though but a few years since it was considered as the most perfect structure of its kind in England; and the improvident woman described by Solomon is surely verified in what regards the demolition of this noble building.—"A wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands."

As we returned we called on the Jacksons. A very pretty girl about seventeen, who I afterwards learnt was the daughter of our steward, opened the door for us. The weather being fine, I walked in the garden with Mrs. Jackson, who never is silent two minutes out of the presence of

her husband. She soon began---"And was it you, my lady, that was Madam Melmoth's prodegy?"* I replied, "I was the same person, to whom Mrs. Melmoth had been the friend and benefactress."---"Dear heart;" her usual expression of surprise, "what luck some folks have! Now my Cleopatra, I dare say, will never have such good fortune."---"Your daughter, Mrs. Jackson, I hope will never want a friend, when she stands in need of one."---"I hope not, madam, my lady I mean; and for the matter of that here is a fine colonel, who takes vast notice of her, and," in a half whisper, "has told her he would marry her, but he has a wife already: that you know, my lady, is unlucky; because, as the colonel says, if he was to marry my Pat, the other wife might be in such a hurricane of passion, as to hang the colonel, and that would be a thousand pities; he

* Protege.

you are equal to. Consult your father and mother after we are gone; and if they will entrust you to me, come up to Bourn to-morrow, and I will take you with me." The poor girl thanked me, while tears of joy ran down her blooming cheek; and looking down upon her clothes, I conceived what she meant. I desired her not to think about her dress; I could easily supply her.

We are now at Eastbourn hourly expecting Col. Yorke, the dear and worthy friend of Sir Charles. I informed my dear Belmont of my intention to take Mr. Jackson's daughter. He very much approves of it, and only hopes she resembles neither father nor mother. I assured him she appeared to be very well disposed; and, in a few minutes after, the poor girl, attended by her brother, arrived, and brought a note from Jackson expressive of his approbation of the plan for his daughter.

A letter has just arrived from Col. Yorke to say he has orders to march to Portsmouth immediately; from whence he expects to embark with the first fair wind; and we leave Eastbourn to-morrow. My dear Maria, I am full of apprehension that I shall soon lose my dear Belmont. I know he expects to be employed again: and one letter he received this morning, contrary to his usual custom, he put in his pocket, without mentioning a syllable of its contents; and seems unusually thoughtful since he received this letter, notwithstanding the glorious news, which fills every Englishman's heart with transport, since there is now a prospect we shall soon enjoy the blessings of peace. In this, who can participate more warmly than my beloved husband, whose philanthropy cannot be exceeded by a Howard. I wish all of that name had inherited a particle of his love for his fellow creatures.

Alas, my dear Maria, it is as I suspected; and we are going to town immediately.

LETTER XXXIV.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Melmoth House, November 6, 1813.

My dear Friend,

DISAPPOINTED as I was by your not joining us at Eastbourn, as your letter informed me of your orders for embarking with your regiment, I the less regretted it, as in a few minutes after I received a letter from the secretary of state's office, with an order for my attendance there at twelve o'clock the next day. Not being informed of the nature of the business, on which I was summoned, I concluded it was

probably to go again to Portugal on the affairs that I knew were then under discussion.

My beloved Emily, observing me thoughtful, immediately caught the alarm; and with tender anxiety inquired if any unfavorable news from my sister, or at Melmoth House, had given me pain. I relieved her fears as to any unpleasant intelligence respecting our friends.—"But, my dearest Emily, I wish you to prepare yourself for travelling, as I must be in town early to-morrow."—"Alas! my dear Belmont, you are then going to Portugal or Spain; perhaps to France, where all is anarchy; and my beloved husband may fall a sacrifice to"— I pressed the dear angel to my heart;—"Too sensibly alive to your tender fears for the safety of your grateful husband, do not, my beloved Emily, cherish such melancholy forebodings. I may not be required to leave England; but if my small services are demanded,

I hope and trust, my Emily's fortitude will enable her to support a temporary separation."---" Only give me a little time, my dearest Belmont, to recollect myself; and you shall find me all you wish: nor shall my fears for your safety, and painful separation, be ever urged to detain you one moment from the claims your country has to the tried abilities of my husband."---"There spoke my noble-minded Emily. And now my love we must be going." She soon equipped herself for her journey, having provided some warm clothing for a daughter of Jackson, whom she has kindly taken. She went on the barouche box with the coachman 'till evening came on.

To Emily I pointed out the beauties of the country we were leaving; but this sweet affectionate wife was too absorbed in thought to attend to my remarks. " My dear Belmont," she cried, " I am truly sensible of your kind intention and

wish to amuse me, though I cannot enjoy those prospects you are admiring: do therefore indulge me by talking of your expected embassy: inure me to think of your absence; indeed I will not wound your feelings by my weakness."

The trembling tear, the quivering lip, and flushed cheek spoke unutterable tenderness to my delighted, but anxious heart: and how often too I ejaculate to myself, "What a happy lot is mine, to be beloved and united by indissoluble bonds to such a woman as my adored Emily!"

We slept at Godstone that night; and, starting early next morning, arrived in town soon after ten o'clock. I drove to Mr. Howard's, in George Street, where I left Emily in painful suspense, while I went to the secretary of state's office. To tell you I was perfectly at ease, and quite reconciled to the idea of being separated from my dear Emily, would be affecting a degree of stoicism I

cannot boast of. Nor was my mind a little relieved by finding my presence in town was only required to assist in arranging and explaining some dispatches received since my return, that related to the subject, on which I was last sent out.

On my return to George Street, Emily was in my arms ere I had ascended half a dozen stairs. Utterance was denied her. I held her a few minutes, fearful the joyful intelligence, I had to communicate, would be too much for her; though I assured her, as soon as she a little recovered, that we had been premature in thus distressing ourselves, as it proved, unnecessarily. A flood of tears welcomed the joyful return of happiness; and having nothing more to dread from this unexpected summons to town, we spent a few days there very pleasantly; and returned to Melmoth House last evening.

I am very much pleased with Mr. Cleveland Howard. I had but a

slight acquaintance with him 'till this late disgraceful affair of my sister; and, with my dear Emily's assistance, am endeavouring, by our united attentions to himself and child, to recompense him in some measure for the addition to his late misfortune, which might have been spared him, but for the iniquity of one, I am ashamed to acknowledge as my sister. Let me know, as soon as you disembark, where I am to direct my letters in future.

Ever your's truly,

CHARLES BELMONT.

LETTER XXXV.

LADY BELMONT TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Melmoth House, Nov. 8, 1813.

ONCE more, my dear Maria, do happiness and your Emily inhabit Melmoth House; and the alarm,

I so lately had, has vanished from my breast. My beloved Belmont is not required to leave England: his attendance was only necessary on a consultation. But you may believe me, had it been otherwise, and the good of his country demanded his services, however painful it would have been to part with him, I had, by every argument I could summon to my aid, resolved not to endeadeavour to detain him a single day or hour on my account; nor urge one wish to accompany him, though I own that would have been highly gratifying to me: and I confess, to acquire this boasted fortitude cost me indescribable torture.

Our plan of going to Sunny Vale is given up 'till the spring: so now, my dear Maria, I must entreat you to arrange all your domestic concerns for joining us before christmas; and pray tell Lady Harriet the addition of her company will be particularly flattering when Bath is so

gay; but we will call our friends and neighbours together to enliven Melmoth House.

Caroline, dear little angel, almost walks alone. Her father is chief nurse; in truth she requires no other; he plays with her, feeds, and walks out with her, whenever the weather will permit her to go.

I have the pleasure to assure you that Mr. Cleveland Howard has certainly two eyes, and those intelligent and pleasing. How very different is he from his brother; who certainly may be called a quiet, and perhaps a good man; but his manners are coarse and vulgar; nor is Mr. Howard without a competent share of pride, which, with pain, I have more particularly noticed since our return to Melmoth House; and this is most observable in his giving orders to the servants. You would be astonished to see the difference upon those occasions between my dear Belmont and his brother-in-law:

though Sir Charles keeps up a proper authority, he always speaks mildly to them; as he justly observes, servitude is painful to bear under any circumstances. He thinks, and I am sure he acts up to it, that, in return for ready submission to our commands, we ought not to make them sensible of the difference, by mortifying their feelings on every occasion, as I have too frequently seen Mrs. Howard practice with hers: and Mr. Howard has too much of the same disposition, I can perceive.

Now I am upon the subject of servants, I must tell you I like Cleopatra Jackson very much; but I must find her another name, I tell her. I have put her under the care of Evans for instruction, who is to be married in the spring. I shall then take Patty, as I shall call her, to be about my person. Adieu, my dear Maria.

LETTER XXXVI.

LADY BELMONT TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Melmoth House, Nov. 11, 1813.

A MOST extraordinary visitor have I had this morning; no other than Mr. O'Kelly. Poor Mr. Howard has been sadly mortified by this visit of the African merchant. Sir Charles and Mr. Cleveland Howard were gone to town; in consequence of which we breakfasted at an early hour, as their intention was to return this evening; but I have since had a note from Belmont to desire me not to expect them.

Mr. Howard was sitting in his scarce existent state, neither asleep nor awake, when the servant announced Mr. O'Kelly. This aroused

Mr. Howard, who was disposed to make his escape, with all possible expedition. Unfortunately he met at the door Mr. O'Kelly, who has greatly the advantage of Mr. Howard in quickness of ideas, as well as in being more on the alert; and immediately conceiving who Mr. Howard was, and that he was making his escape from an unwelcome visitor, without any ceremony he seized one of Mr. Howard's coat buttons.—" Arrah, my honey, you don't slip through my fingers so. A word or two before you go to kennel." —" Mr. O'Kelly, as I suppose you are called, this visit is as unexpected as undesired by me."—" All that may be very true," cried O'Kelly; "but it has nothing to do with the business at all at all; so no sneaking behind the curtain. My daughter, or grandaughter, which ever you plase to call her, is married to your son. Come! no screwing up your smelling pipe at me; but come for-

ward like a good father, and give your son his fortune. If you don't wish to starve your own flesh and plood, give him something to keep pody and shoul together." Mr. Howard replied, he had no property of his son's; and there was no law that could oblige him to provide for a disobedient child. "I tell you what, brother-in-law, I hear there is a little pit of chousing going on; and that is the business that has brought Dennis O'Kelly to seek you out."—"I am equally a stranger to your business, as I wish to be to your person, sir;" answered Mr. Howard; and making another attempt to leave the room, Mr. O'Kelly, taking an immense stride, placed his back against the door, and stopped all farther progress; the bell also being close to the door he equally protected that from being rang.—"Now, by St. Patrick, and the pest plood in my pody! you leave not this room 'till you give a petter account of yourself,

than you seem inclined to do:" his hand often flourishing to give effect to his argument; and sometimes rather in a threatening attitude, which was not lost upon Mr. Howard. O'Kelly felt his advantage, and continued his attack;---"First, and foremost, place what do you mean by going for to say your son has no estate, becase as how a brat was born eight or nine months after the death of its mother. Now, Mr. Howard, brother-in-law of mine, I appeal to this company if such a thing ever happened either to man or beast; and I wont have my Camilla and her husband bothered out of their lawful right by any such frumped up, unnatural importations." Mr. Howard's pride was severely wounded, I saw, by being called *brother-in-law* to one, whom he considers little better than a merry-andrew, and which I think was done more out of effrontery than ignorance, yet was obliged to answer him, which he unwillingly

did by assuring him there was no deception or fraud intended; it was too painful a subject to converse upon, but he should be informed by letter of every particular relative to the matter in dispute. Mr. O'Kelly shook his head, but was not inclined either to yield his post against the door, or his doubts of Mr. Howard with-holding property from his son.—"Now, Mr. Howard, brother-in-law, hear me once for all. My little Camilla is as pretty a crature as any you shall see on a summer's day. I mean no disparagement to any Howard, or this here lady, but my Cam shall step into her saddle with any of you, and not be ashamed to shew her paces before the best audience in the united kingdoms, and d——me, she shant be choused out of her right. You will plase to recollect, brother-in-law, I have kept your son three months for nothing at all at all; but, as I see how the land lies, he must now begin work; for,

py St. Patrick! I keeps no pody in idleness: from the lion to the parrot all do something for a livelihood."—"And, pray sir," asked Mr. Howard, "what occupation have you appropriated for Mr. Horace Howard?"—"You must plase to observe, sir, that very much depends upon the tallons of the young gentleman. If he has an hare for music we begins with him first beating time upon the tom-bore, whilst some of our foaks dance, either upon two legs or four, as may happen to suit. But plase to observe, Mr. Howard, brother-in-law of mine, we are not talking at all at all to the purpose. Will you do any thing for your son and daughter; or will you not?"—"I have informed you, sir, that I must consider before I give a decided answer to a question, which would have come in a better shape from Mr. Horace Howard, than when put by a person entirely a stranger to me."

I was most truly pained to witness

the mortification and distress of Mr. Howard; and determined, at all events, to extricate him from the vulgar solicitations of O'Kelly. I went up to him, and resolutely rang the bell, desiring him at the same time to quit the door, that neither myself or Mr. Howard should be detained there longer than was agreeable to us. He seemed rather surprised by my spirited address, and quitted the door; which I opened, saying to Mr. Howard,---"If you, sir, wish to retire, I beg you will do so. If I cannot, in the absence of my husband, protect you from insult, my servants shall.

It was evident that Mr. O'Kelly depending upon Mr. Howard's pusillanimity, came fully determined to oblige him to make a provision for his son, and the wife he had chosen; and which I certainly did not intend to interfere in. But when I saw such symptoms of timidity in Mr. Howard, I thought it highly necessa-

ry to put an end to any farther contention that he might have the advice and assistance of Sir Charles and Mr. C Howard.

Mr. Howard leaving the room, Mr. O'Kelly became very obsequious; begged my pardon; said he did not mean to give offence: "But as you appear to be a rasonable woman, my lady, you shall judge if I have not a right to expect something pretty for my Cam. My stock in trade is considerable; all being well brained, and in good health. Independent of that, I have realized twenty thousand pounds. I don't reckon any thing for the time lost and money spent in manœuvering for two seasons before this chap was hooked; that all goes into the account of losses by casualties. I have also a bog, and tight little cottage, with a pit of potatoe ground, in the county of Monaghan. All this will be my Cam's. The young man did certainly set himself off, and made us pelieve he

had plenty of rich relations, an estate of his own at nurse, and its all a fetch; and instead of an estate I am told it is a little pit of a child at nurse. But plase to observe, my lady; and may I blunder in the best trick I shew, and be hissed instead of applauded, if I dont turn up trumps, and unkennel the knave, who wants to chouse my little Camilla; d-----me, if I don't!" and to my great joy he marched out of the room with as little ceremony as he came in.

Mr. O'Kelly's language is one quite of his own composing. Irish undoubtedly he is, though he often substitutes the P for a B. Mr. Howard complains of gout; brought on, no doubt, by the agitation of spirits.

Poor Jackson is obliged to be confined;---quite deranged. Mr. Williams, a tenant, wrote to inform Sir Charles of this; and that the unhappy man had been constructing what he called a war chariot, fixing scythes to the nave of the wheels; and dri-

ving it amongst some cattle going to market he wounded several; and for fear of more mischief, his horse was shot, to stop him in his progress: he was thrown out, but not much hurt. Sir Charles has written to secure proper care for him, and appoint an allowance for Mrs. Jackson and the two younger children. The eldest boy is come to Melmoth Park. Patty has had a letter from her mother; and is, poor girl, overwhelmed with grief, as some of the particulars were communicated by her weak mother, which were peculiarly distressing. I do all I am able to comfort the good girl, who is not insensible to my kindness; and now she knows care will be taken of her father and the family, she is more composed.

Do write and fix the day when we are to expect you. Lady Harriet must not refuse my request of seeing her with you. I am making an arrangement that will I know make your dear father feel himself at home.

Never was I so gay: never was I so happy. Yet from your dear society I expect to derive an addition to that which I at present enjoy.

Your's truly,

EMILY BELMONT.

LETTER XXXVII.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Melmoth House, Nov. 23, 1813.

My dear Henry,

BY the papers I find you are not yet embarked; I therefore direct this under cover to a friend at Portsmouth, enclosing one for Mrs. Mansfield from her father, whom I called on when at Sunny Vale. It was some time before I was admitted; but being determined to see him, having heard that Mrs. Hold had left him, I again sent in my name, and

earnestly requested to be admitted; "I came from Spain, and had seen his daughter." I was then shewn into the room, where Mr. Hold was sitting with two young children, one of whom was playing with some ivory letters; the other in her father's arms. His countenance wore evident traces of heartfelt woe. I begged him to excuse my being so importunate; but under the present circumstances it was necessary for his own comfort, that I should see him.---"Comfort to me, sir," he replied with quickness, "it is not in the power of any human being to administer. Do you not see these poor little infants deserted by their unnatural mother? A just retribution, you will tell me, for deserting my poor Harriet."---"If you were induced to do so by misrepresentation, or other circumstances, you have it now in your power amply to atone for an error in judgement, not of the heart." I then described the situation in which I first discover-

ed Mrs. Mansfield: and also that her husband being again wounded, was disabled from active service; and must quit the army; and if he would sanction their coming to live with him I would arrange for their immediate return.—"Oh, sir, can you see my present affliction; and doubt the feelings of the father! I have suffered for my folly; and if my dear girl, and her husband, can forgive me, my doors, my arms, and heart, are open to receive them."

This being settled, I requested Mr. Hold to write to his daughter, from whom he had not heard since she left England. I assured him she had written, as I had brought a letter with me, which I knew was put in the post-office with others. "Ah," he replied, "that circumstance is only one more instance of the arts, that have been used to wean me from my children." He then proceeded to give me a history of his wife's misconduct, which ended

with her elopement with a young officer, about two months before; and that regiment being gone out, I dare say she has it in contemplation to annoy the poor Mansfields; but I hope they will escape her machinations in safety, and be once more under the roof of a kind father.

A few days since, in my absence, Mr. O'Kelly paid a visit to Mr. Howard. I have discovered that he had been some days in the vicinity of Melmoth House; and have no doubt was watching for an opportunity of my absence to see Mr. Howard alone. Farewell, dear Henry.

Ever your's truly,

C. BELMONT.

My dearest Emily desires me to tell you she does not believe you are going to attack an enemy abroad; you are only flying from an ambuscade at home.

LETTER XXXVIII.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO LADY BELMONT.

Bath Easton, Dec. 2. 1813.

MY dearest friend, I am dying to join you at Melmoth House; and am half in love with your Belmont already. Your husband is doing as he ought to do; mine is punishing those who do not. I am quite tired of this making people good whether they will or no; and when I am a little restive myself Brensly recommends patience in tones not by any means in unison with quiet feelings.

I am just disappointed of a walk with Brensly, who is detained by the complaints of a widow, with half a dozen children in her train; and as she cannot declare her late hus-

band's parish, the officers have brought the whole covey to my husband that he may find out a resting place for them. He has found one, for a short time, by a good fire, with plenty of good cheer. This I do not so much object to as the time he gives, which is what I did not bargain for: it was not in our marriage articles; and therefore he has deceived me, as I can prove before any court in law, or equity.

O! here he comes, dear fellow; he looks very handsome, I do think. I cannot finish my letter.

You may expect us in a few days; but my dear father is not equal to the journey on account of the cold, which affects him. Lady Harriet is consulting all the becomings, from the flower in her hair down to her shoe bow. Our friend Mrs. Blake, and her daughter, are kind enough to offer to stay with my father in our absence. We were highly amused by O'Kelly's visit; though I think

Mr. Howard quitting the field, and leaving you exposed to the vulgar violence, he was afraid of, was shameful pusillanimity indeed. I admire O'Kelly claiming affinity to Mr. Howard; an impudent assertion quite in character with such a man.

MARIA BRENSLY.

LETTER XXXIX.

LADY BELMONT TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Melmoth House, December 20, 1813.

My dear Maria,

YOUR letter this morning informs me of your intention to be here in a few days; but I cannot be put off longer than the next week. Your dear father's excuse is too forcible for me to urge a single objection; and I really dreaded the journey for him in this season of the year,

We have one less in family for a few days only; Mr. Howard having recovered his gout alarm, left us this morning, fearing, I rather suspect, another visit from Mr. O'Kelly. Luckily dear little Caroline has a mark on the back of her neck that must have been observed by the woman, who dressed her: and which no doubt Mrs. Howard assisted in doing. With her it rests to identify the birth and existence of Mrs. Cleveland Howard's infant. Mr. Cleveland Howard has requested Mrs. Howard, by his brother, to enable him to find the woman, who received the infant from her, and assisted in conveying it to me, that he may as soon as possible establish her claim to her mother's patrimony. My dear Belmont has also written in very strong terms to his sister, stating the necessity of her doing this act of justice, without delay.

I am quite impatient to have you here. Come, my dear Maria; that

we may mutually enjoy each others happiness. Sir Charles and Mr. Cleveland Howard both express great anxiety to see you, Mr. Brensly, and your amiable sister. Give my affectionate love to your dear father, whom we will pay our respects to early in the spring.

LETTER XL.

LADY MITFORD TO LORD HEADLY.

Mitford Hall, Dec. 28, 1813.

My dear Lord,

AS you have taken such interest in endeavouring to discover the author of a letter you received, evidently intended to injure Lady Belmont, I need not apologize for informing you that letter has been acknowledged to be a fabrication by the very person, who so mysteriously

imposed an infant on Miss Melville's protection. It is a distressing affair to many worthy relatives. The happy developement of this mysterious business has extended its influence to a respectable circle of friends, by whom my dear Emily was beloved. I am anxious, my dear lord, to introduce you to the amiable group now assembled at Melmoth House; and shall be most happy to be favored with your's, and Lord Darnly's company, during the recess of parliament. Sir James, who deputes me to convey his sentiments, unites in kind regards.

With your lordship's obedient

ISABELLA MITFORD.

LETTER XLI.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO REV. MR. ASHBOURNE.

Melmoth House, Dec. 28, 1813.

I HAVE stolen a few minutes to relieve the anxiety of my dearest father for his Maria; and have the pleasure to inform you we arrived in perfect safety at Melmoth House this day, before two o'clock. This will convince you your injunctions not to be late were attended to. Our slip-slops, having a chaise to themselves, left us at liberty to be as disagreeable as we pleased; but on the contrary, never was there a happier trio than travelled from Bath Easton to Reading.

My good man began to be a little grave as we entered the first gate of

the park. I suppose the recollection of old offences gave him a twitch. Sinners never relish the retrospective; and perhaps he was a little doubtful as to the first reception. "My heavens, Brensly," I exclaimed, "you look like one of those fellows you committed the other day. Have you broke into a house, or knocked a man down? Why, man, your looks will hang you. I will give you leave to repent of every action you ever committed, either good or bad, but that of making me your wife."—"Dear, saucy, bewitching girl," cried he, kissing my hand, "that act I never can repent of; and I hope you, my dear Maria, never will have cause to regret calling me your husband."

No time for provisos and assurance. Open flew the doors; and in flew the birds of passage. Emily, Sir Charles, and Mr. Cleveland Howard, were in the saloon to receive us. In an instant was Brensly restored to him-

self by the friendly, and even sisterly reception, with which Emily met him, and introduced him and Sir Charles to each other. Sir Charles conducted me to the drawing room, as Brensly did Lady Belmont, leaving Harriet and Cleveland Howard to conduct each other. On entering the drawing room, Caroline was playing on the carpet. I caught her; and holding her up, I cried, "Who owns this?"—"Not I!" cried Brensly. "Not I!" cried Sir Charles. "I do!" exclaimed Mr. C. Howard, as he entered the room; and taking her from me, presented her to Lady Harriet, accompanied by a few words, that covered her with blushes; but I do not believe they were of a disagreeable import, though she made no reply, but kissed the child with such fervency, as was sufficiently expressive to Howard.

Emily inquired after you with her usual solicitude; and though anxious to see you here, is quite reconciled

to your not venturing in such severe weather. All here unite in affectionate regards. Brensly will make me add his name with mine in that old fashioned word *duty*. That is one of his artful tricks to remind me of my marriage vow of obedience. I can give you no descriptions of Sir Charles or Mr. Howard. Mr. C. Howard has, I assure you, two eyes, which is no objection to Lady Harriet. Love to Mrs. and Miss Blake; and ten thousand expressions of affection to you, the kindest best of parents to an affectionate daughter in

MARIA BRENSLY.

LETTER XLII.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Melmoth House, January 2, 1814.

MELMOTH House is become a scene of festivity. Mr. Brens-

ly, with his lively wife, and amiable sister; two Miss Montagues, and their brother; and the Howards. I am very much pleased with Mr. Brensly. I could wish to have included Mr. Ashbourne in our circle of friends, as my dear Emily speaks of him with such affection.

I wish you had been here yesterday evening. It being the last of the year. Mrs. Brensly was anxious for a ball to celebrate the commencement of the new, though she knew she would not be allowed to dance herself. An invitation was given to all the young and gay in the neighbourhood of Reading. The decorations were the employment of Mrs. Brensly and Emily: the folding doors between the two large drawing rooms being thrown open, and a temporary orchestra erected for the music. Lord Headly, and Lord Darnly, his son, are on a visit to Sir James Mitford, they were of the party.

After the four first dances, four

masks entered; two in dominos; the others, being dressed elegantly in the Spanish style, danced a Spanish bolero very much to the amusement and admiration of the company. The bolero being concluded, and an Italian air called for by the gentleman, his partner in the dance now astonished us by warbling forth notes, which so much delighted the elder domino, that, making up to Mr. Howard, he exclaimed, with an air of triumph, "Arrah, my honey! there's a sky lark for you: now, Mr. Howard, brother-in-law of mine, shew a neater little girl than my Camilla." Mr. Howard started up in a moment; nor waited to hear the conclusion of Mr. O'Kelly's speech.

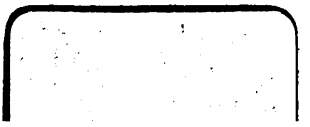
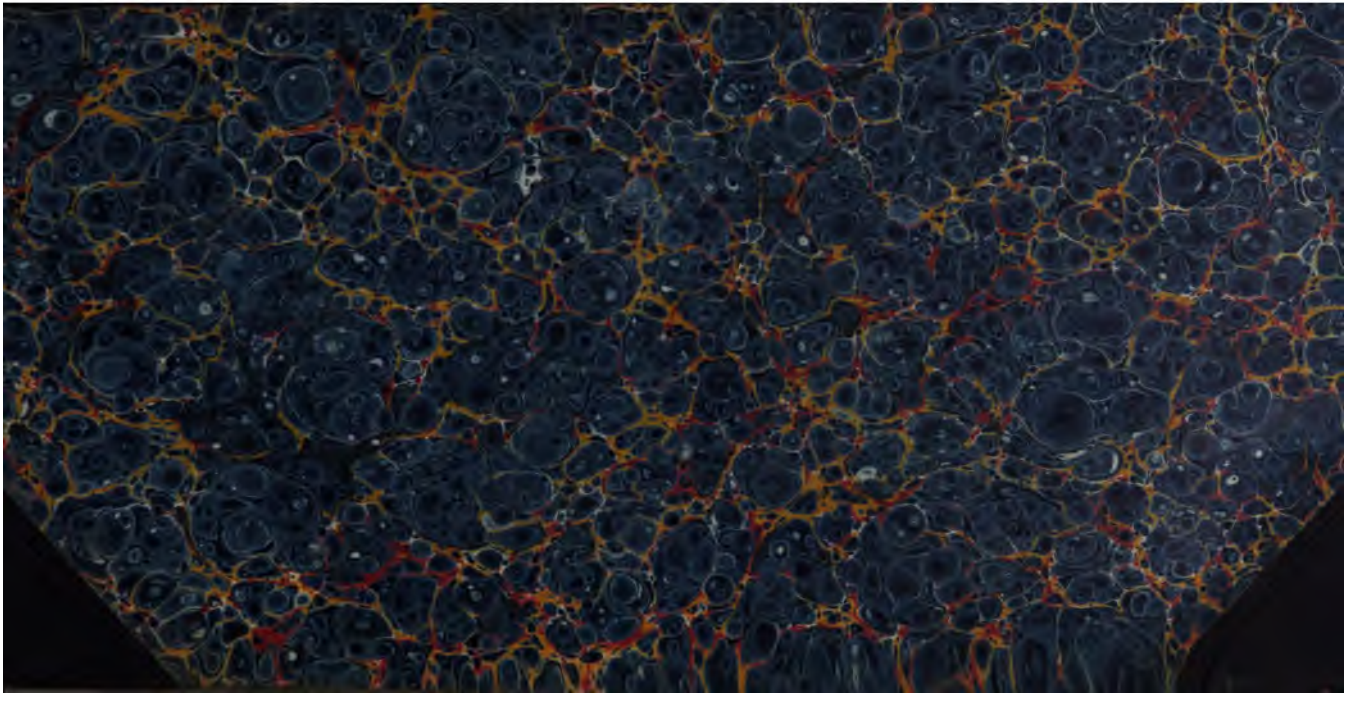
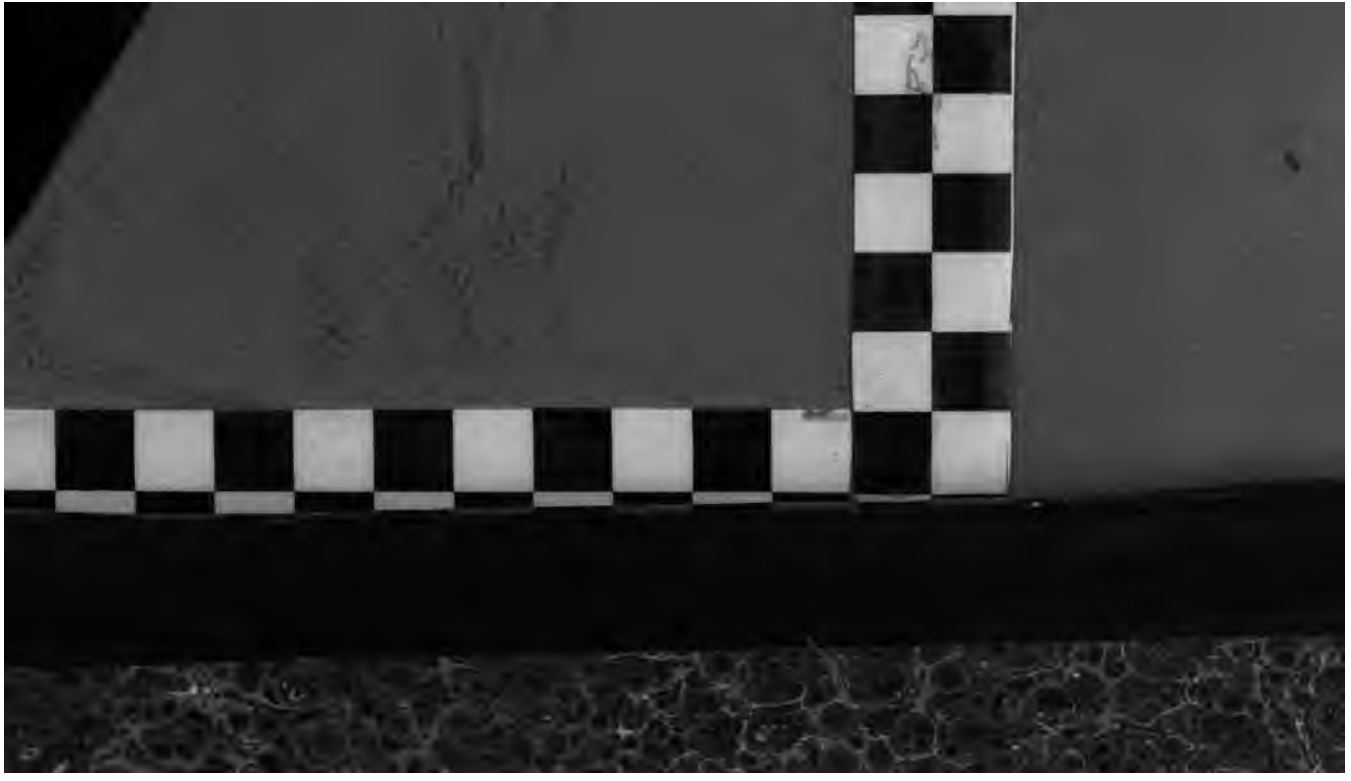
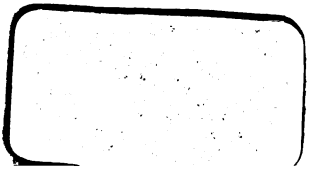
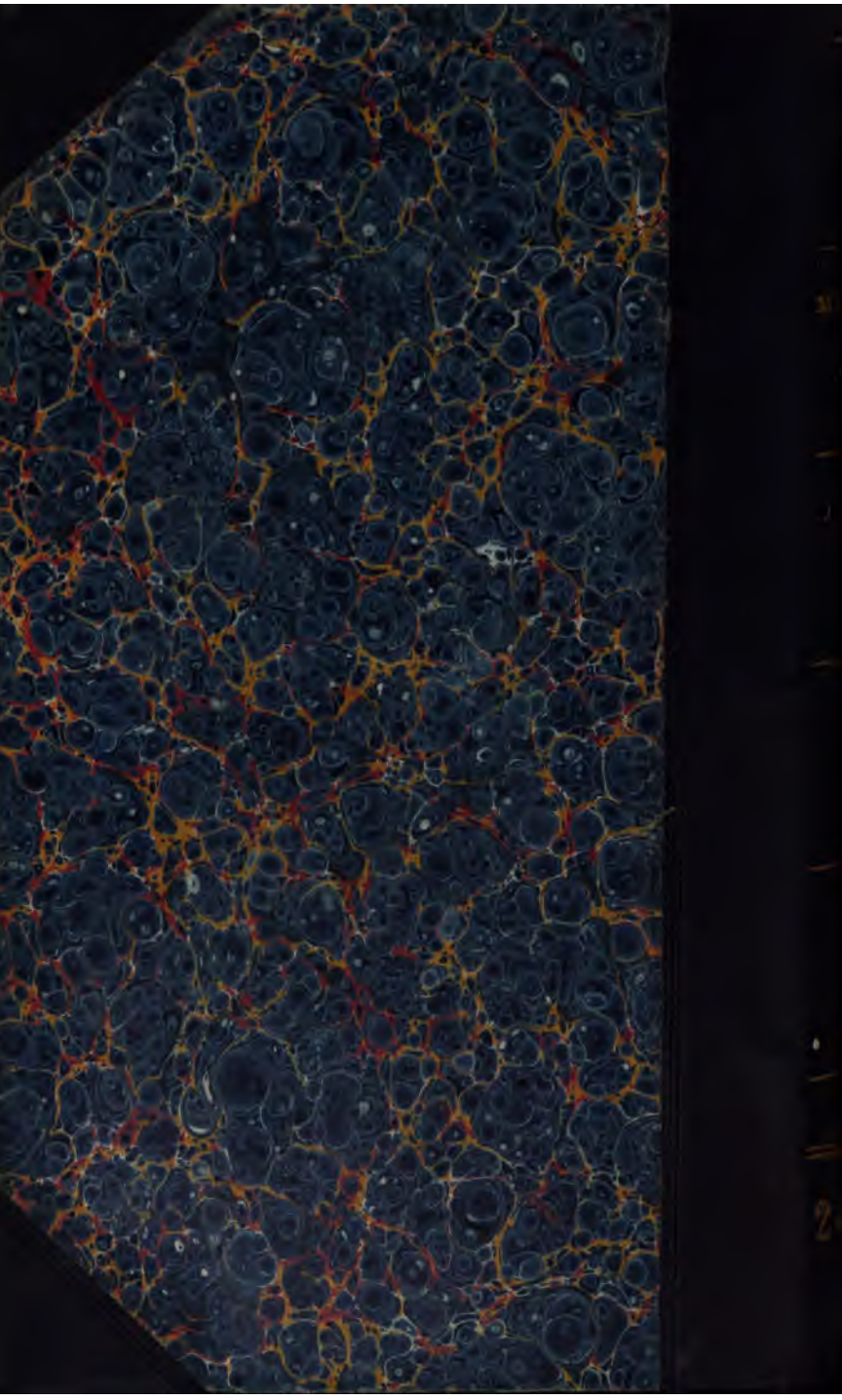
When the masks entered, Emily was leaning on my arm; and we were both standing by Mr. Howard, who was sitting on a sofa. The instant O'Kelly spoke, Emily knew who it was; and whispered me, she thought Horace was the other domino. Her

conjecture was correct; and, coming up to me with the same effrontery as he used to do to his mother, I requested him and his companions would leave the room, as mine was a select party of friends, and were not to be broken in upon by strangers; that if he had any business with me I should be at liberty the next morning. They retired, though not without considerable dissatisfaction expressed by Mr. O'Kelly.

The next morning Horace came, unattended by any of his new relations. Mr. Howard did not forget the father; or that by his pusillanimity of character he had been accessary to the errors of his son. Horace has consented to go into the army. I have promised to add to his father's allowance. Horace and Mr. O'Kelly are satisfied as to the identity of Mrs. Cleveland Howard's child.

I have now only to wish for the society of you, my dear Henry, to complete the happy group at Melmoth House.

CHARLES BELMONT.

FINIS.

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